



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Wadleigh Secondary School for the Performing
and Visual Arts**

Middle-High School 415

**215 West 114 Street
New York
NY 10026**

Principal: Herma Hall

Dates of review: June 2 - 3, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Louise Kapner

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Wadleigh Secondary School for the Performing and Visual Arts is a middle-high school with 675 students from 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 65% Black, and 35% Hispanic students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 88.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 77% eligibility.

The leadership of the school has had a number of changes this past year. As of February 2008, the school's assistant principal for humanities became the interim-acting principal. The school has two new interim-acting assistant principals. The school shares the building with Frederick Douglas Academy 2, also a grade 6 through grade 12 school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The interim-acting principal works untiringly to move the school forward to improve students' outcomes.
- The school's review of data pays close attention to individuals, whole school performance, subjects and for all student subgroups.
- Creative scheduling and excellent use of staff are highly effective in supporting the school's goals.
- Students have many opportunities to participate in a high quality arts program that is well integrated into the school's curriculum.
- High expectations are clearly shared with students to motivate them towards improved achievement.
- Parents are welcomed into the school and appreciate the emphasis on instruction.
- Classroom instruction is rigorous, engaging and well matched to students' needs.
- Excellent out of school partnerships ensure that students have many opportunities for success.
- Administrators and staff work in a highly collaborative manner, focused on instruction and improving student outcomes.
- The school continually reflects on its programs and makes suitable adjustments to raise student achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the whole school goal-setting process and procedures for monitoring progress towards meeting interim and long-term objectives.
- Review in greater depth the students' suspension data to better address acting-out behavior.
- Involve all students in the reflective process of setting and monitoring of personal goals towards improving achievement.

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 interim-acting principal, assumed her leadership role in February 2008. She effectively uses her knowledge of the programs, staff, students and parents to further the school's development. She regularly reviews the data to monitor the performance and progress of students, classes, grade and cohort and by subject. However, the school does not disaggregate student data for suspensions to address effectively student behavior. Her careful analysis includes year-to-year comparisons of all available data, with an eye on the State's annual measurable objectives as an indicator of the school's progress. The school is rightly proud of meeting the middle school's and exceeding the high school's benchmarks in English language arts and math. As a result, the school will lose its designation as a school in need of improvement.

This growth in students' performance can be attributed to a comprehensive approach to improving instruction. Students participate in classwork that is well matched to their needs. An extensive arts program, well integrated into the curriculum, builds on students' talents. High expectations are shared continually with students through conversations with teachers, challenging work and clear expectations for grading. The school has established excellent partnerships to support the school's goals. Through College for Every Child and College Board, a majority of the graduates enter either a two or a four-year college program, some of them with full scholarship. The school's effective practices, that include a high level of collaborative planning, enable staff to work by department and content area to develop instructional plans and effective strategies to raise student achievement. A cohort of students involved in the Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program set personal achievement goals that they regularly revisit and suitably revise. However, this is not an established practice for all students. Skillful scheduling maximizes the use of teachers. They are programmed to teach multiple level courses to ensure that students are able to participate in well varied, challenging programs that maximize their opportunities to earn a Regents or Advanced Regents diploma. Parents are highly appreciative of the school's efforts. The fact that many students are siblings or family members of former attendees speaks to the recognition of the school's high standards.

The inquiry team targeted grade 9 students achieving on level 1 in the English language arts exam. These students were provided with a high level of content area instruction in science to improve their chance of success in the Regents. The school has made good progress since the previous Quality Review. The introduction of Renaissance Learning as a structured reading program in the middle school is raising student achievement and providing teachers with ongoing assessment data that is used well to guide instruction. The school regularly looks at student work and scholarship reports to reflect on best practices as they continue to plan collaboratively to move the school forward.

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 holds itself very accountable for the performance and progress of students. This includes their successful completion of high school with a view towards achieving a Regents or Advanced Regents diploma. The school collects, organizes and reviews extensive State and school-generated data relative to individuals, grade, cohort, and class, and by subject. The in-depth analysis extends to all student subgroups, including students who are English language learners and receiving special education teacher support services. Students' transcripts are extensively reviewed to monitor trends in individual and class performance. Results are used effectively to identify students for advanced placement courses and to restructure the school's programming for accelerated class work. As a result of reprogramming global studies, the student pass rate increased from 20% to 80%. The data review process is particularly valuable to identify seniors in need of additional help to meet credit accumulation and/or Regents requirements. The school does a very good job of comparing its results across years and pays particular attention to the State's annual measurable objectives in English language arts and math. The middle school met both its targets and the high school far exceeded its required benchmarks in both subject areas for 2007-2008. Very good comparisons are made to learn from peer and City schools. The principal finds the network's data specialist and the network meetings especially helpful in looking at her school's performance relative to others.

Teachers maintain and review extensive data to monitor their students' performance and progress. Authentic student work, conferring notes and ongoing assessments provide valuable information to inform instruction. A majority of teachers use management systems, such as 'Grade Pro' or 'Think Wave' to store information and generate reports that identify students' needs and monitor their performance and progress over time.

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.

The principal is highly focused on building capacity to implement an instructional program to improve student achievement. She uses her cabinet meetings and faculty conferences to articulate her vision to her staff. Staff in each content area review very effectively formal and school-generated data. In addition, they analyze student work during collaborative instructional and department team meetings to set goals to improve student outcomes. During their common planning time, social studies teachers work to prepare review materials for the upcoming Global Studies Regents. They analyze extensively students' results on practice, multiple-choice questions and essays to pinpoint specific topics needing further explanation and students needing additional help. The school provides very good interventions for students most in need and for higher achieving students. The high school's school-based option provides for an additional five minutes of programmed instruction into every class. The middle school programs double-periods in English language arts and math to "capture students" for longer instructional periods. Middle school students attend a Saturday academy where they engage in well-matched learning

activities to improve their performance in math and English language arts. Teachers review transcripts to monitor student performance and progress, to evaluate each student's growth and effectiveness of programming, and to identify students' eligibility for advanced coursework. The school's goals and high expectations are very effectively communicated to students and parents. A cohort of students in the AVID program is involved in goal setting. However, this practice is not established school wide. Students receive progress reports and report cards that set out clear expectations and inform students of their achievement. Parents are regularly informed of their child's progress. They receive interim reports that reflect preliminary grades and highlight specific areas of concern to address what their child needs to do to be successful. Parents welcome this level of communication and highly appreciate the positive environment that encourages them to share relevant information about their child with the school.

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 is highly evaluative of its curriculum so that it meets the needs of all students. Renaissance Learning provides an excellent structured reading approach for middle school students. Teachers use diagnostic tests, and program assessments, to set individual reading levels and goals for students and to monitor students' performance and progress. Students enjoy the selection of books that are engaging and well matched to their ability, and proudly monitor their own progress from one level to another. One student, reading *Little Women*, shared how much she has improved, and discussed how she and her favorite character, Jo, have much in common. High school students are engaged in a vigorous program, including many College Board certified courses, enabling them to maximize their potential. Well-paced syllabi, based on State curriculum, include differentiated learning activities and materials to engage students.

Teachers continually monitor student assessments and scholarship reports to guide instruction. The school lives up to its name as a visual and performing arts school by providing students with extensive opportunities to expand their talents. Many students win awards for excellent work. Students are highly engrossed as they complete their replication of a painting by a famous artist and complete research-based projects on artists and artwork. The school's goals are well supported by creative scheduling and maximizing staff assignments. Middle-school students attend Regents level math classes enabling them to take Regents level and advance placement courses in high school. Students welcome the challenges and one student told how she traveled two hours from Brooklyn because she loved the math class. Teachers undertake extra preparation to help students improve. The two year Global Studies Regents, offered in one-year, provides students with concentrated instruction. As a result, the pass rate on the Regents increased. Although expectations are high, and courses challenging, students know they can get help from their teachers or administrators.

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 administrators supervise teachers across the school. Assistant principals assume similar responsibilities but by content areas. Through formal and informal observations

they monitor instruction and student learning. Teachers see this as a “comfortable process” with valuable feedback. They especially appreciate the opportunities to participate in well-varied professional development both on and off-site. Through highly effective partnerships, teachers attend ongoing content-based learning activities to improve their instructional strategies. In collaboration with the American Social History Project, English and social studies teachers attended workshops offered at the City University Graduate Center. They then plan collaboratively to incorporate the strategies in their instructional program. Teachers frequently use common planning time and informal visits to colleagues’ classroom to learn and share best practices. New teachers are highly supported and they receive mentoring from colleagues to become proficient instructors. The school works hard to effectively implement discipline procedures to support a calm, nurturing environment. Administrators know almost all students by name and continually encourage them to behave appropriately. However, the student suspension rate is at a higher level and the school does not review this data to plan suitable interventions. Counselors provide excellent guidance to them throughout their time in the school. Highly effective partnerships further ensure that students receive every opportunity for success. College for Every Student helps match students to appropriate college programs. Grade 10 students visit the business offices of a well known organization that regularly supports the school and assisting students to be successful.

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 principal is truly self-reflective of school practices. Such reflection is now being extended to students so they can track their own progress and make adjustments in order to reach their final targets. Each year interim and long-term goals are set to improve student achievement. The school uses a wide-range of data to monitor progress of students and successful teaching strategies. Administrators meet with staff after each marking period. They review carefully scholarship reports and interim and curriculum-embedded assessments to monitor closely students’ performance and progress. Any fall in student performance results in prompt revision of practices to ensure improved outcomes. Teachers set goals to ensure instruction is well paced and suitable for all students. Students involved in AVID set goals and revise them regularly. They participate in relevant activities to prepare them for college. However, this is not a school-wide practice.

The school’s careful analysis of data also provides valuable information that is used well to plan strategically to meet the needs of students. As a result of improved achievement in literacy by middle-school students, additional laptop computers are planned for students to access Renaissance Learning on-line assignments and assessments to improve further their outcomes. On the high school level, students’ results identified the need for programming Algebra 1 and Geometry in grade 9 to enable higher achieving students to sit for two Regents in one year. The principal and her administrative team and staff work untiringly to plan effectively. They are very committed to continuing to provide students with suitable instruction and enrichment to ensure their future success.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Wadleigh Secondary School for Performing and Visual Arts

Quality Score

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 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	
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 and tardiness?				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, 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
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