



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**High School for Leadership and Public Service**

**High School 425**

**90 Trinity Place  
New York  
NY 10006**

**Principal: Frank Brancato**

**Dates of review: December 3 - 5, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Chris Andrews**

# Content of the report

## **Part 1: The School Context**

Information about the school

## **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

## **Part 3: Main Findings**

Progress made since the last review

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

## **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The High School for Leadership and Public Service is a high school with 714 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 29% Black, 56% Hispanic, 5% White, and 10% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 83.6%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

There is no specialist room for physical education so the school uses a large room in the basement, the cafeteria and, when appropriate, the outdoor space provided by Battery Park.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The collection of data is a strong feature of the school, and this informs teachers' understanding of students' progress
- The needs of special education students and English language learners are clearly understood and effectively addressed.
- The process for setting individual student's goals is collaborative and has clear timescales and criteria for success.
- Expectations in the school are high and are shared with, and supported by, students and their parents.
- The deployment of staff and budgetary resources is managed strategically to address those areas of greatest identified need.
- Relationships between faculty members and students are strong, and contribute to the positive attitudes with which students and parents regard the school.
- Professional development for teachers is aligned both with the needs of the school and with teachers' own aspirations and goals.
- Students are provided with opportunities to display leadership qualities and to show commitment to the wider public community.
- Links with outside entities, particularly with Syracuse University, contribute significantly to meeting school aims particularly in terms of developing students' life skills.
- The principal is a respected and effective leader with a clear vision for the school's further development.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to review the progress of subgroups of students in the school, with particular reference to differences in performance by gender.
- Ensure that there is a good balance between teacher led instruction and opportunities for students to work independently or in different forms of small group instruction.
- Develop a formalized program for intervisitations, both within and across departments to enhance further teachers' pedagogical skills, with particular reference to the differentiation of instruction.
- Ensure that there is a high degree of consistency between and within departments in terms of grading policies.

## 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 High School for Leadership and Public Service is a very welcoming institution whose students, through their activities in support of national causes and the local community, actively reflect the school's goal of producing committed and unselfish young adults. Students and their parents speak enthusiastically of involvement in charity activities like the AIDS and Breast Cancer Awareness walks and speak proudly of giving blood for the first time. The school is led by a principal and administration who have high expectations of all members of the school complemented by the commitment and enthusiasm to drive the school forward.

Since the last Quality Review in February 2007, some progress has been made in addressing all of the areas highlighted for development. The school has had particular success in motivating students with poor attendance and in providing opportunities for others to show their qualities of leadership. The work undertaken is still being implemented, but the school can be proud of its success in making its student goal-setting process more rigorous and in continuing to develop its excellent links with Syracuse University. Like the Summer Bridge program for new grade 9 students, the Syracuse Summer College is an explicit statement of the school's high expectations of its students. Both programs challenge students to develop new skills and attitudes toward learning; this is in tune with the principal's vision for the school which is, 'to develop students who are well prepared for the outside world and for lifelong learning'.

Students generally enjoy coming to the school and are engaged by many of their classes, but there is an imbalance between teacher led instruction and opportunities for students to work independently. The school also recognizes that there is no formalized program to allow teachers to visit each others' classrooms. The opportunity to observe high quality practitioners in a range of subject areas who demonstrate excellent pedagogical skills is therefore limited. The school is successfully addressing the lack of motivation among certain students by a series of programs which either provide alternative content or different styles of presentation. Students find the range of activities offered interesting and remain in the school after the end of the school day to play games or to socialize. The Inquiry Team is well established with a clear focus on certain "at risk" students and a target date of the end of the semester has been set, by which time the impact of work with these students will be measurable.

## **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 collection of data is a strong feature of the school and this informs teachers' understanding of the progress of their students as individuals. Teachers are supported in tracking student progress by a newly available database which both identifies students' current performance across all subjects but also shows their progress over time. Teachers are also regularly given data, generated by the principal, for their own class in relation to the grade and the whole school. This allows teachers to monitor their own teaching and also enables the administration to identify areas of strong performance or to focus appropriate support for a teacher. Teachers record, in grade books, a wide variety of data for their individual classes in terms of homework, class participation and test and quiz scores. Some of these grade books show very sophisticated systems of computer-based data keeping but there is little consistency in terms of the formats used for this purpose.

The needs of special education students and English language learners are now more clearly understood and effectively addressed. The data for these students is analyzed and English language learners are given appropriate support through pull out classes. All special education students are in mainstream classes for certain subjects and their progress is reviewed at the end of each marking period to support their personal development as full members of the school community, with the principal directly involved in this process. Data and observations suggest that these students are, in general, making good progress. Data relating to different subgroups within the school is reviewed, but not significantly used to inform instruction, in particular with reference to differences in performance by gender. The databases are now available allow teachers to access very detailed records of individual students which can be used to plan both short and long term goals. There is ongoing training to maximize the benefits of these data sources for teachers.

**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.**

Whole school goals are set by the administration in conjunction with the school leadership team and from these overarching goals the departments produce their plans. Due to this process, there is awareness across the faculty of the progress the school intends to make in any one year. Goals are numerical and are reviewed after marking periods in grade or subject meetings as a result of detailed analysis by the administration. Modifications to plans and teaching programs are made at this time to take account of that analysis. The process for setting individual student's goals is collaborative. Review of progress, involving students and teachers, takes place after the marking periods and focuses on the students' report card grades. In that conference with a member of the faculty, short term goals for the next period are created, with clear areas for development and success criteria. The introduction this semester of a written record of the process, signed by teacher and student, has added rigor to the system. It is too early to assess the impact of the new arrangement but students already regard it as important in helping them to progress and "to keep us on track".

There are similarly clear procedures to establish goals for special education students who are effectively helped to transition both within the school and from school into work or further study. Students in most need of support are quickly identified from teachers' data and interventions, such as after school tutoring or peer tutoring, are put in place. Improvements in report card scores show these interventions to have been to be generally effective. For those who are held over there is the Recovery Program in which all are making progress and in which nearly half the class have passed all subjects for the first time in their school careers. Expectations in the school are high. They are shared with, and supported by, students and their parents, through conferences, letters and parents' nights. They are exemplified in practice by scheduling accelerated classes and Advanced Placement classes in certain subject areas and through published definitions of what a good student in a particular subject will do and achieve. The result is that students have high aspirations in terms of passing their examinations, going to a good college or finding appropriate employment after leaving 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 proficient.**

The school follows the mandated curriculum and ensures that students are able to study a wide range of subjects which broaden their educational experiences. It also provides classes directed to specific student needs such as the Advanced Placement classes and the Recovery Program, both of which are successful for their target groups. Teachers collect a wide range of data to inform their instruction. However, there is inconsistency, both across and within departments, in respect of the weightings given to the different elements, such as homework or class participation, which make up the overall percentages at the end of each marking period. This is unfortunate as these are the marks which are providing the basis for the next phase of student goal setting, and it also allows students to have the perception that "it is easier to get an 85% in some classes than in another".

Students generally enjoy their classes and comment positively about involvement in group work, literacy circles and whole class discussions. However there is an imbalance between teacher led instruction and opportunities for students to work independently or in different forms of small group instruction. This in turn can make it difficult for teachers to differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of the range of student abilities that exists in most classes. Teachers do, however, provide students with very good feedback, usually through the use of rubrics, to identify the strengths and the areas for development in their work, and both students and parents appreciate this. The deployment of staff and budgetary resources is managed strategically to address those areas of greatest identified need. The hiring of extra teachers to allow for the capping of English and math classes at 25 students is a response to concerns emerging from data about early student progress. Scheduling double periods for the Global Studies Regents class has been introduced to address concerns about student performance in the Leadership element of the examination. Relationships between faculty members and students are strong, and contribute to the positive attitudes with which students and parents regard the school. Students and parents believe that there is mutual respect and one parent noted with approval that most teachers "don't talk down" to the students but "treat them as young adults".

**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.**

Professional development for teachers is aligned both with the needs of the school and with teachers own aspirations and goals. Teachers welcome the opportunity to have input into the professional development planning through a questionnaire, although the agenda for this remains largely determined by the administration. Teachers, however, tend to request professional development mainly in terms of the content of their subject areas, rather than in teaching methodology. New teachers are now supported by mentors who are to continue this role for the teacher's first full year. The initial review of this innovation by the administration through observations suggests this is an effective development and it is welcomed by the teachers themselves. New teachers undertake intervisitations within their own subject area but there is no formalized program, either within or across departments, to enhance pedagogical skills, particularly in reference to the differentiation of instruction. Students are provided with, or have found for themselves, opportunities to display leadership qualities and to show commitment to the wider public community. Parents are particularly pleased with this as it was highlighted in the last Quality Review as an area for development. They are enabled to contribute to school decision making through the School Government, and links with outside entities contribute significantly to developing students' life skills. The Syracuse University partnership is especially important in addressing the needs of many different students. It provides mentorships on a one to one basis for many, scholarships for some and the opportunity, through such activities as repainting school classrooms, for any students who wish to contribute to the wider community. Students develop self-confidence and this is reflected in classroom performance.

**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 comprehensive education plan is reviewed regularly by the school leadership team. The key meetings for student progress are held monthly with lead teachers for each department. These meetings allow the leadership to review student progress against subject and whole school goals. They also identify whether there are areas for professional development emerging from the data analysis, as well as from informal observations. There are also monthly departmental meetings which allow teachers to have input into the process. Discussions are linked into the whole school review process by the attendance of one of the assistant principals at each meeting. In the case of a teacher's professional development plan, there are well established procedures to support a teacher. These include clear areas for development highlighted in conversation and in writing, with success criteria and a timeline for implementation. In all cases the outcome of these reviews leads to modifications in instruction, to further professional development or to an adjustment of subsequent planning. There is, therefore, a cycle of monitoring and review which is developing alongside the new databases to provide a fuller picture of student and whole school progress. The principal is an effective leader with a clear vision for the school's further development. He is greatly respected by students and parents for his personal approach to students and his "open door" policy. He and his administration envisage the overarching aim of the school in terms of inculcating good "lifelong learning" habits into the students. They have a strong commitment to providing a school in which all students are enabled to fulfil their potential.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: High School for Leadership and Public Service</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 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		
<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?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				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 make 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		