



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The High School of Arts and Technology

High School 494

**122 Amsterdam Street
New York
NY 10023**

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Dates of review: February 24 - 25, 2008

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The High School for Arts and Technology is a high school with 594 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 47% Black, 52% Hispanic, 0.5% White, and 0.5% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 66% of the students enrolled and girls account for 34%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 80.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 72% eligibility.

The school shares the building with five other high schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal, supported very effectively by the cabinet, is clear about the actions needed to secure the school's future development.
- The school has done a good job in implementing data collection and presentation systems that facilitate speedy analysis of student assessment.
- The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) classes build effectively on these students' commitment to learn and help them make good progress.
- There is clear commitment and dedication by most staff for students to do well and so most students aspire to go to college.
- Students value that staff take time to listen and the advisory classes that give them clear guidance about their academic and personal achievement.
- Teachers work as an effective team to support each other's work.
- The school's "family atmosphere" is a direct result of positive relationships good student behavior and attitudes, and clear organizational procedures.
- Collaborative team-teaching classes successfully include and enable special education students to access the same learning as their peers.
- The school monitors student progress closely, and in response adjusts interventions, programs and schedules that ensure most students reach grade standards every year.
- Some subjects have clear long-term and interim goals that measure constantly student progress.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure all teachers use data consistently to differentiate instruction so that students are enabled to reach their potential.
- Widen the range and variety of teaching methods in some classes to consistently interest and engage students fully in learning.
- Extend the good practice of giving students verbal and written feedback about their achievements, and guidance in how to make improvements.
- Establish the schools systems for rigorously monitoring the quality and effectiveness of its work against assessment and attendance data.
- Continue to find ways to engage more parents in their children's education.
- Explore ways of offering to students more regular arts and technology experiences.

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 proficient.

The principal, supported very effectively by the assistant principal and cabinet, has a clear vision for what needs to be done to ensure the school's continued improvement. The strong relationships between adults, students and with each other have contributed to the positive family atmosphere in school. Staff have created a school that listens to students. As a result, they feel comfortable to talk to adults about their work and personal issues. Many students respond positively to the school's high expectations that they will go to college. Parents who are involved welcome the openness with which they can talk to staff. For the most part, teachers work well together to plan learning that engages student interest. In particular, the Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) classes utilize a range of teaching strategies that engage students and help them make good progress. There is some work still to do to make sure all teachers use a wider range of teaching and learning methods to engage all learners fully. Collaborative team-teaching classes are successful in meeting the needs of special education students within general education classes. However, some teachers still do not use data effectively to plan learning that meets the full range of achievement in class and enable all students to reach their potential. The curriculum is generally broad, although arts and technology are still not offered regularly to all students.

Since the previous review, the school has consolidated its data collection into one comprehensive system that enables the speedy analysis and aggregation of assessment data. As a result, the school knows how well each individual student, each grade, class and subject are doing by ability, ethnic and gender groupings. These systems are leading to the setting of more objective long-term and interim goals, and a more rigorous approach to monitoring progress, planning schedules and adjusting programs. The inquiry team has access to this database and so monitors the achievement and progress of its target group effectively. All subject departments have adapted the grading policy to suit the needs of students. The English department gives verbal and written feedback to students. Consequently, they know what the checked boxes and grades mean and so are clearer about how to improve their work.

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 has recently introduced a computerized system for recording, displaying and disaggregating assessment and attendance data that gives staff a very quick overview of

individual student achievement and progress. By shading each student's progress green, yellow and red, the school can quickly see who is and is not making enough progress in all taught subjects. Teachers can quickly see who needs an extra boost or reminder to turn work in on time and gain the extra credit(s) they need to graduate. Data over several years has been entered and so the school can track student progress since they joined the school in all classes taken. This is helping the administration to target classroom observations and the monitoring of student work, and to plan relevant professional development programs. Using a filtering tool, the school can quickly see how well different ethnic, gender and ability groups are performing by class, grade and subject. In addition, it can interrogate the data in more detail. For example, it can display the achievement and progress of African American boys in English in grade 10 at the touch of a few buttons. By comparing achievement data with attendance, the school can see quickly and easily whether this or something else is a factor for any underachievement identified. The inquiry team members have the expertise to help teachers to interpret and use the data to plan for effective learning. Training to ensure all teachers can manipulate the data independently is ongoing.

The school carefully monitors the achievement and progress of special education students, as well as for English language learners and students who are in danger of slipping back or need an extra push to gain a higher pass rate in Regents. The school compares its performance against other local schools and when it finds another school is performing higher, investigates the reasons why so it can learn from its success.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has three clear goals that focus on key areas for improvement. Each subject has its own goals that are measured by student success in assessments. Now that the school can input interim assessment results into its computerized system, it is beginning to monitor more closely, whether individual students, grades, classes and subjects are on track to reach the end-of-year goals. This is enabling departments and teachers to adjust curriculum and instruction during the year. Every department has adjusted the grading policy and developed rubrics that suit individual subjects' needs and that guide teachers' and students' assessment of each assignment. On some rubrics, comments are general and not defined clearly enough to give students precise knowledge of their next steps. To address this, the English department adds comments that celebrate achievement and identify what students will or should learn next.

The school gives students who need extra support individual and small group tutoring through extended day, PM classes and Saturday school. In order to develop a more inclusive climate for learning, the school has organized more collaborative team teaching classes this year and so special education students are able to access the same curriculum as their peers. Academic intervention services clearly identify each student's needs but the delivery of support in classes is variable.

The school through its parent coordinator works hard to involve and keep parents informed about their children's progress, and about its high expectations for student achievement. Parents who are involved value the open door approach and the support

they get in helping their children's learning at home. While nearly all parents attended the graduation meeting, there are still some parents who do not visit the school regularly.

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's curriculum enables students to graduate with a range of subject credits and Regents exam passes. The "Virtual Enterprise", art and technology programs enrich the range. However, students would like regular opportunities to take part in art and technology activities. Additional enrichment opportunities broaden students' experiences including field trips and a residential during the sophomore year. Advisory classes give students good opportunities to consider career options and give clear guidance about academic and personal achievement. Students value the fact that staff take time to listen. As a result, many students have high expectations and the learning environment continues to improve. Attendance is also improving due to the consistently applied systems to monitor and encourage students to come to school on time everyday.

The extent to which teachers use data to differentiate instruction is inconsistent. Some teachers use data well to plan learning that meets the wide range of capabilities and interests in their classes. However, too often students do the same work with different amounts of in-class support. Consequently, some students find the work too hard while others find it too easy. Some teachers constantly assess students' learning by asking them to explain their responses or by summing up what has been learned at the end of each lesson. Several teachers do not use intra-lesson assessments or final summaries to assess learning. As a result, subsequent classes do not build sufficiently on previously learning.

The level of student engagement in classes is variable. Some teachers use a narrow range of teaching methods and rely too much on teacher-directed instruction such as dictating subject facts for students to enter onto the same cloze procedure worksheet. This minimizes the amount of student-to-student interaction and opportunities to express their own ideas. Other teachers involve students in discussions and debate, relate learning to real-life experiences, encourage collaborative group working and use resources to bring learning to life. This engages students' learning effectively. When talking about history, one student said, "The teacher makes us feel that we are really there." Teaching in the AVID classes incorporate writing, inquiry, collaboration and reading in all classes. Some teachers are beginning to follow this model because they see its benefits in bringing about effective student learning.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The principal and assistant principal visit classes regularly. Follow-up discussions with individual teachers about how they can improve their practice are more effective with those teachers who are open to new ideas and who are prepared to change the way they teach. Professional development always focuses on the needs of the individual and

the school. AVID training is helping many teachers to extend the range of teaching methods they use to engage learners in class. There is a clear commitment from most staff for students to do well. This is reflected in the regular meetings and professional discussions about student learning and achievement and in the shared responsibility for making sure students stay on track to get the credits they need to graduate. Guidance counselors give student suitable support, although beyond mandated services there is more focus on improving attendance than on a consistent approach to guiding students' academic and personal development. The school relies on advisories and teachers giving students the guidance they need to achieve academically and personally.

There are clear procedures for ensuring the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. There is a good balance between supervising student movement between classes and making them responsible for their on actions. The school always challenges unacceptable behavior within a positive approach. As a result, students trust adults and behavior and attitudes are generally good. Partnerships with Broadway theaters result in discount tickets so students who wish can go to plays and productions. The "learning through arts program" has successfully led to a student's play being performed off Broadway this year. Students visit colleges to learn about courses and to gain some experience of what it is like to go to college.

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 introduction and use of the school's new data analysis system are leading to more focused and objective action planning and the monitoring of the school's effectiveness this year. There is now a formal monitoring program for ensuring the school is on track to reach its goals against the interim assessments completed at the end of each marking period. Strategic decisions are now based more securely on a close analysis of student assessment and attendance data. All departments are involved in evaluating the impact of their work against student achievement and progress data. They are responsible for writing action plans that detail subject goals and how they intend to implement improvements, and for making ongoing adjustments to these plans, curriculum programs and instructional practice in response to ongoing data. Teachers are aware of student outcomes at the end of each marking period and are beginning to use this data to measure student progress towards meeting their end-of-year goals. They use the outcomes of a skills and test question analysis to target specific skills in extended day tutoring. The school is now well placed to establish the program in day-to-day practice.

The principal, assistant principal and cabinet are clear what needs to be done to secure the school's continued improvement. The principal and assistant principal take joint responsibility for the school's work to make sure that what has been agreed is either happening. They decide together what action to take when this is not the case.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The High School of Arts and Technology	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 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