



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Frederick Douglas Academy

Middle School-High School 499

**2581 7th Avenue
Manhattan
NY 10039**

Principal: Dr Gregory Hodge

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Lead Reviewer: George McLeman

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Frederick Douglass Academy is a middle school-high school with 1431 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 72% Black, 27% Hispanic, 1% White and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 55% eligibility.

The school's overriding aim is to provide a foundation for college placement. Students joining the school are expected to attend summer school before admittance, and they must wear a school uniform. The school has extended day and weekend programs.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school promotes high academic achievement of all students at all levels.
- The principal has a strong presence in the school and provides exceptional leadership.
- Teachers communicate high expectations to their students and are fully committed to raising achievements of their students.
- The progress of students is closely monitored and effective remedial support is provided where necessary.
- The curriculum is broad, challenging and closely aligned to college placement.
- The professional development of teachers is given high priority, is sharply focused on the needs of teachers and is effectively delivered.
- The after-school program of enrichment activities is varied and engaging and offers good opportunities for the students' well-rounded development.
- Students are diligent and responsive in class and are courteous and cheerful around the school.
- Effective links are made with external organizations to the benefit of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to seek ways to ensure that all teaching is appropriately challenging, learner focused and responsive.
- Continue to build the capacity of the staff to share and develop leadership.
- Evaluate the impact on instruction of teachers' professional development.
- Ensure that the outcomes of actions are evaluated to assess the effectiveness of plans.

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.

Led by an exceptional principal, the school has very high expectations of all students. These expectations clearly shine through the curriculum, instruction and organization of the school. They are continually conveyed to students and parents and are largely met. All members of staff are committed to the central goal of raising achievement at all levels. Of the many excellent features at this school, the most impressive is the way that individual students are supported in their academic and personal development. Their studies and progress are closely watched and, if they need academic assistance, effective support is immediately available. The staff use data extensively to track the progress of students across their teaching programs. This ensures that staff know precisely what steps each student has to take next. The school has an excellent record in its Advanced Placement program with 100% of the students placed annually in the college of their choice. It recently won a prestigious national award for “excellence in education of African-American male students” reflecting its outstanding record in promoting the academic achievement of Black males.

The school is an orderly, relaxed and studious place where students respond positively and cheerfully to the expectations held of them and to the many opportunities offered in the curriculum and enhancement programs.

The school has responded fully and positively to the three issues identified for improvement at the last review. As a result attendance, short-term goal setting and differentiated instruction have all improved. The school is now well placed to continue its remarkable success with developments in its inquiry team work, in its reviewing of the impact and effectiveness of its extensive professional development program, and in its further building of the leadership capacity of the senior staff.

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student’s progress over time.

This area of the school’s work is outstanding.

The school generates, analyzes and uses a wealth of information to monitor and understand the progress of the students at all levels. Data from state tests, from the Regents Diploma and Advance Placements exams, together with school tests, observations, student journals and portfolios, provide a depth of data on the progress of each student, class and subject department. A particularly careful watch is kept on students who find the work difficult or whose progress slows. Frequent conferences and discussions are held at class, subject and whole school levels to identify factors that hinder

progress. The students' response in classrooms is constantly monitored and feedback conveyed to them. The students know that their learning and progress is important to the teachers and to the school overall. The data is effectively used to provide additional support, to gain renewed motivation from the student or to consolidate and extend curricular skills and knowledge required to pass external exams. Teachers and coordinators are most diligent in monitoring and discussing progress of special education students. The use of after school tutorials, summer schools and weekend coaching all stem from the identification of needs. All of these measures have a significant impact on the progress and contribute to the high achievements of the students.

The use of technology in collating and organizing the data is developing well. Training in the interrogation of data has been held during the last year and teachers are beginning to use it effectively to identify patterns of progress with individuals and groups. Although the school has a good record of collating and analyzing data, this is not yet reflected in the work of the newly established inquiry teams.

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 outstanding.

Goal setting is securely rooted on the assessment data, and is widely and effectively undertaken. Led by the principal, the school expects and sets high standards for all. From the wide range of data accumulated, goals are set for individuals, subject departments, grades and the whole school. These are precisely framed and closely tracked. Goals for the percentage of students who qualify for the Advance Regents Diploma, for example, are set to increase by 5% this year and a 10% increase is planned for students attaining Level 4 on the New York State tests. These goals are translated into practical strategies and the accumulation of credits by individual students is continually promoted and monitored by staff. All students know and understand how they are progressing and what their next steps are. This aspect of the school's work has improved significantly since the last review. Parents are continually informed of their children's work and progress through regularly and individually e-mailed bulletins.

Aligned to this, is the considerable time and attention given to students who are in greatest need of improvement. Individual counseling, where the views of parents and the students themselves are sought, reveals reasons for lack of progress. Goals are set on the basis of the discussion and detailed information generated. For example, students who have difficulties completing homework at home are given intensive tutor support after school, and where they find instruction difficult on any topic, additional learning materials and tasks are provided with the required knowledge broken down. This has led to improved progress of many students.

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 curriculum is closely aligned to the school's central goals of raising academic achievement in the core subjects and gaining college placements. It has an intensive

focus on the students' incremental academic achievement in English language arts, mathematics, the sciences and foreign languages. The arts are also well represented in the curriculum with music, art, drama and dance. The principal's budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are closely linked to supporting the school's curricular goals. In particular the recent acquisition of sophisticated equipment for technology, botany and astronomy further motivates and supports the students in their studies. In addition, the school has a very wide range of exciting extra-curricular sports and cultural activities. These include robotics, drama, dance, judo, basketball, chess, music making and recording. They are well attended, expertly taught and make a strong contribution to meeting the school's overall goals.

Teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects and have high expectations of their students. Classrooms are well organized, attractively displayed and have a studious and inclusive culture. Teachers are working hard to develop differentiated instruction strategies and to increase the engagement of their students. This is generally effective but the school recognizes that it has much to do to spread and fully embed this practice across the classes and subjects.

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 administrative team place considerable emphasis on building the capacity of teachers to meet its central goal of driving up standards. Teachers and coaches are fully committed to the continual development of their professional knowledge and instructional skills. The school also focuses on the development of teachers' subject knowledge across the curriculum and, in particular, how to provide appropriately challenging, learner focused and responsive teaching. This reflects good progress from the last review.

In addition, the principal's regular visiting of classrooms and ensuing observational notes taken together with student achievement data, contribute to well-targeted individual development of teachers. All teachers have an annual interview with the principal on their instructional goals and this is preceded by the completion of a comprehensive and detailed self-evaluative report compiled by each teacher. While the school provides many accounts of the progress of individual teachers, it has not yet provided a rigorous evaluation of the effects and impact of the professional development activities across the classrooms.

The strong emphasis on improving the quality of instruction is not fully matched in the development of the leadership capacity of other staff. Although the principal is aware of his responsibility in this regard, and continually discusses the careers of his senior staff, his hands on approach means that he does not readily share higher level strategic policy making or delegate decision making widely with them. While the assistant principals contribute to many facets of the school's work, their contributions are not explicitly directed, fully understood or rigorously evaluated.

The school has built strong and effective partnerships with a range of external organizations for the benefit of the students. The principal has been untiring in his efforts to secure additional funding and resources from commercial businesses. This includes the gaining of equipment for hydroponics, botany and radio telescopes. Lately the school has also contributed leadership and subject expertise to a partnership with Columbia University

to instigate and develop science and technology teaching in local elementary and middle schools.

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 has a clear vision for a high achieving, successful school. The school has clear goals and sound procedures for tracking the impact and effectiveness of many of the measures adopted to improve student performance and progress. At individual level, for example, the close monitoring of test outcomes enables instructional staff and guidance counselors to apply remedial procedures such as counseling, additional support in class or individual tutorials quickly. Interim tests also provide information from which teachers and coaches can adjust curricular emphases and instructional direction. The principal ensures that staffing and resources are directed specifically at achieving the school's vision and goals.

On wider issues such as professional development or curricular change, the school has not yet developed interim or end of year procedures to review their impact. The school has yet, for example, to embark on an evaluation of its actions to improve the quality of instruction. Moreover, many of the goals set last year do not have an explicit statement as to their completion nor link to those set this year.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Frederick Douglass Academy	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 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
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X	