



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Edward A Reynolds West Side High School**

**High School 505  
140 West 102 Street  
New York  
NY 10025**

**Principal: Jean McTavish**

**Dates of review: May 7 – 8, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Peter Williman**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Edward A Reynolds West Side High School is high school with 578 students from grade 10 through grade 12. The school population comprises 36% Black, 63% Hispanic, 1% White, and 0.5% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 20% 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 65.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 64% eligibility.

This is an alternative transfer school.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is a very strong and successful protagonist for the social, pastoral and academic welfare and progress of her students.
- The school provides very strong support to students to grow as responsible members of a community.
- There is a strong environment of respect and mutual trust, which underpins the success the school achieves with students.
- The principal has a clear vision of the priorities to develop instruction to raise achievement and progress.
- The school sets high expectations of student behavior and work ethic and as a result is successful in raising student achievement.
- Data is collected and analyzed very purposefully to introduce students to the school and to track their progress.
- The administration is a well-integrated team in skills with clear roles, and responsibilities.
- The school demonstrates clear capacity for ongoing improvement through the evidence of a constructive and effective response to the last review.
- Professional development at school and department level is very effectively aligned to school priorities to enrich instruction.
- The faculty works in harmony and shares demonstrate clear commitment to students' progress and welfare

### What the school needs to improve

- Document the analysis of school data more formally to assist clearer school overview and to identify more specific, measurable goal setting.
- Further develop teacher and departmental skills in analysis of data to inform planning, differentiation and assessment.
- Develop curricula to ensure that content, process and assessment are well aligned.
- Scrutinize the work and achievement of similar schools in greater depth to learn from and compare progress.

## 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 Edward A Reynolds West Side High School is highly successful in meeting its priority goal to enable students to grow as responsible members of a community. This is the result of the principal's clear and shared vision, her good knowledge of her students and the positive and constructive environment she has created with the administration, faculty and support teams. As an alternative transfer provision, the school receives the most challenging students. The innovative, highly effective organization of "Family" home bases and "Neighborhood" groupings of the advisory classes provides a structured response to their identified needs. It underpins and models the principles of the goal. The school very effectively enables students to address issues of personal interaction and to contribute to the school community. Faculty and social workers support students' individual self-knowledge and their progress very well. As a result, students feel valued, develop self-esteem and believe they can succeed. Expectations of behavior and work ethic are high. The building is very safe and orderly.

The school makes effective use of the data available to it. Limited accessibility has reduced the range of relevant data and the school's capacity for deeper analysis of progress at student level. Despite this, there is a good understanding of student progress. The administration and faculty have a detailed overview of students' achievement on entry. The school regularly and frequently tracks progress towards graduation. As a result, teachers are accountable. Students have goals and know their next steps in requirements towards graduation. Most students make steady progress and a significant proportion graduate, at least at the lower Regents and diploma levels. This is a tribute to the quality of instruction as most students enter as under-credited and over age.

The school has made a good response to the improvement points of the last review. Many teachers are looking more closely at how students learn. They are more aware of learning styles and levels of students understanding. Consequently, students are more interactive and engaged in lessons. Smart boards are generally used as a stimulus, to inform and to question. Teachers are beginning to differentiate in lessons to match instruction to students' levels of understanding. The inquiry team's action research demonstrates a useful model of data analysis for wider application. The principal recognizes that not all curricula are fully fleshed out with sufficient detail to align content, process of instruction and assessment.

## **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 administration and teachers have a clear view of individual and class achievement and progress across the school. School generated assessments and Regents data are used effectively to monitor the progress of students on a very regular and frequent basis. Initial reviews of student achievement on entry are detailed and efficient. The data from quarterly cycles of assessment is strengthened by mid-cycle data. The school tracks attendance fastidiously. The use of the Scantron program adds to periodic information. Special education students and English language learners are kept under close review. Gender and ethnic groupings are monitored effectively. Students know their pace of progress. However, the school is significantly frustrated by the inaccessibility of the Acuity program data. This restricts its capacity to analyze student and classroom achievement in greater depth. The administration has identified progress among some English language learners as an issue and is responding to this. The school uses comparisons between scholarship reports and Regents' data to cross check the validity and rigor of assessment. However, the administration does not always use the capacity it has to collate and overview data to the fullest effect. This limits deeper insight, and therefore clearer focus, on some aspects of student performance. The principal has identified a similar school and made some qualitative comparisons but this process is not developed in detail.

Effective professional development and clear leadership have enabled teachers to review their student data more critically, in addition to observing levels of achievement and the pace of progress. Most teachers do apply their own in-house analysis of student learning deficits but analysis generally is not sufficiently sophisticated. The administration rightly wants teachers to reach the deeper level of item analysis to gain understanding of student learning styles. The introduction of the Teacher Ease program is helpful to those teachers who have piloted it. The work of the inquiry team in developing action research and the ensuing strategies to focus upon specific elements of student progress, demonstrates a useful model for wider application. Improved student progress has resulted. In these respects, the school has responded well to the improvement points of the previous review. However, for logistical reasons analysis cannot yet be supplemented by the available City assessments. Teacher's skills and use of analysis of assessments at deeper levels is not yet fully structured and systemic.

**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 priority goal of the school is to be a collaborative, non-confrontational responsible community, committed to academic and behavioral improvement. In view of the challenging nature of new entrants, their under-accreditation and generally over-age status, this is a rigorous and demanding goal which is measured qualitatively. The school is very successful in working towards its attainment. The school is a harmonious community with a shared focus. There is a high expectation of students' social behavior. In this school all students are categorized as in greatest need of improvement and as a

result, there is a very clear focus on each individual student's needs. The transient nature of the student population places urgency upon improvement. Students develop a confidence that they can be successful learners. They know their own goals and timescales to achieve graduation, through detailed, regular conversations with teachers and social workers. Rubrics based on State standards assist their understanding of next steps for improvement but these are of variable quality. The pathways and time scales for gaining the various qualifications are clear. Specific needs and goals for students effectively guide the organization of classes and programs. As a result, students make generally good progress often from a low baseline.

The school does not yet use its capacity for data collation to the full, to set overall measurable parameters or to evaluate progress. Goals and plans for instructional development are clearly in place, although not fully documented with time frames. These plans are at too early a stage to make quantifiable judgment of their success or to for resultant data to inform targets to improve students' achievement. The school exercises its best efforts to communicate with parents and guardians. By the nature of the age of the students and their personal circumstances, this is often problematic.

**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.**

Overall, instruction, school procedures and curriculum opportunities are effectively aligned to school goals and serve students well. Budgeting, staffing, and scheduling decisions illustrate this. The scheduling of Family advisory lessons is paramount to school support for students. The choice to have seven social workers with the resulting student support dovetails well. Common planning and staff development times reap benefits. Expectations to make instruction more compelling are clear. As a result, more teachers are using multi-sensory instructional approaches. Good use of new smart boards motivates, informs, questions, and illustrates points. These kinds of developments are in line with the improvement points from the last review. Strategies to differentiate instruction to student levels of learning, while maintaining the integrity of goals and assessment, are under development. This is not yet systemic. The assessment program makes teachers very accountable for instruction.

There is a high level of trust and mutual respect within and beyond classrooms leading to a safe learning environment. This results from non-confrontational, constructive management and problem solving. The principal's relationships with students are the epitome of this approach.

The curriculum within and outside the school day is broad and very effectively developed. However, the documented curriculum is not fully aligned with assessment to be fully instrumental in serving instruction. The pre- and after-school programs support accreditation and Regents preparation well. Artwork is given authenticity for example through evocative murals in stairwells. Students collaborate with the Lincoln Centre for opera productions. The school supports the survival of a local radio station. Sports clubs are available. The Virtual School computer lab enables students to catch up their learning at individual levels. Attendance remains stubbornly low, despite the good systems, rewards offered and relentless efforts of teachers and the attendance team.

**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 from her own analytical observations, her good grasp of pedagogy and in conjunction with the work of her assistant principals has a clear understanding of the priorities for professional development. As a result, there are well-integrated strategies for individual and school staff development. Most teachers raise levels of student engagement through more varied presentational styles. Differentiation has a clear foothold of good practice in some lessons. Teachers share and evaluate their good practice. In a science department meeting, two teachers took a lead role. They demonstrated differentiated lessons, which varied the level of challenge to students while retaining the same goal and assessment criteria. Teachers have structured opportunities to observe each other although this is not systematically built into the schedule. The school supports new teachers to the school and to the profession effectively and structures mentoring well.

The exceptional and very successful achievement of this school is the rebuilding of students' self-belief in themselves and in their potential to influence and be a part of a community. This results from the very skilful work of social workers, teachers, and the administration. Procedures are clear and discipline secure. "Strictly no fighting!" was a student comment. Well-selected partnerships broaden students' outlooks, prepare them for college, and ensure their health and well-being is supported. Good quality day care enables students who are parents to continue their education with confidence.

**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.**

Students and teachers are aware of the timeframes and the benchmarks for reaching achievement goals. Some students have an accelerated schedule of expectation. The school necessarily works to the school year in setting prescriptive goals because of the transient nature of the student population. School development goals are not so prescriptive and this is a weakness. Professional development is an example. Annual objectives are in place for new developments and revisits to previous priorities. However, data is not yet correlated to measure the success and impact of new initiatives. The principal recognizes that the work of the inquiry team offers a possible blueprint for development. Teachers individually and in their departmental teams evaluate student progress against ongoing classroom assessment and periodic data. They revise plans to reflect the requirements of students' learning deficits. The administration revises programs to match students to more suitable courses. Students, have diverse, varying needs and different rates of progress caused by absence or complications in their personal circumstances. As a transfer school, the school is very adept at flexible planning to adjust to this unpredictable student population. However, the principal maintains a clear and shared vision to accelerate student learning further through more sophisticated instruction and building upon the very good behavioral and socializing education the school offers. The capacity for this is demonstrated by the school's good improvement since the previous review.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME:</b> The Edward A Reynolds West Side High School	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 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		
<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 and tardiness?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X		

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					X

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					X

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>