



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

City-As-School High School

High School 560

16 Clarkson Street

New York

NY 10014

Principal: Antoniette Scarpinato

Dates of review: April 7 - 8, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Georgie Beasley

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

City-As-School is a high school with 685 students from 11 through grade 12. The school population comprises 36% Black, 37% Hispanic, 19% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 84%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

City-As-School is a transfer high school for students who have not succeeded in graduating in other high schools. The school shares the building with two other schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and staff have high expectations and aspirations for student success and bend over backwards to help students gain the credits they need to graduate.
- The school's vision for learning permeates all that it does.
- There is a very strong commitment from all staff to do whatever it takes to reconnect students to learning.
- Very positive relationships ensure mutual trust and high levels of respect between students and staff.
- Students' emotional development is a priority and effectively built through well-differentiated academic and guidance programs and interactions.
- Excellent use of data enables staff and students to plan a personalized journey toward graduation.
- The extensive range and variety of classes and internships set learning in real-life contexts, give learning purpose and relevance and enable students to develop important life skills.
- The constant evaluation of programs checks the schools effectiveness and informs future action planning and goal setting.
- Students have a passion for learning because teachers, guidance staff and administration plan a curriculum that enriches and excites learning.
- Students have high levels of responsibility to build, organize, schedule and assess their progress and achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- Formalize opportunities for teachers to visit each others classes and internships to share expertise and further enhance instructional planning.
- Ensure the consistent use of student reflection sheets to further extend students' independence in monitoring their progress towards each cycle's learning goals.
- Continue to develop the school's analysis of data to identify whether any trends exist and if so, where and why.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The principal is clear about her vision for the school's continued success. She is supported by every member of staff and every student who is successfully moving toward graduation. Very positive relationships create an atmosphere where everyone trusts each other and treats each other with mutual respect. Students value being regarded as young adults and the responsibility they are given to plan, organize, schedule and keep track of their learning. Strong emphasis on building student emotional development always brings about a change in attitude and an eventual reconnection and passion for learning. Students enjoy an extensive variety of internships to companies and/or organizations to learn about the world of work that enable them to develop important life skills.

Since the previous review of the school's design your own assessments, the school has introduced an effective computer system for tracking and recording student achievement and credits gained toward graduation. The data is used to plan a personalized route for all students to ensure that they graduate in the shortest possible time. Goals and responsibilities for monitoring assessments are clearly identified and gaining feedback from students has become a regular feature of the school's evaluation process. Teachers visit each others classes and internships, although this still relies too much on individual teacher's requests and initiative rather than it being a formalized feature of the school's regular scheduling. The inquiry team has identified 37 students to closely monitor progress, to identify patterns in achievement and monitor the effectiveness of interventions. This builds on a pilot project previously in place to identify and apply successful interventions to different individuals and groups of students. The school does disaggregate data to evaluate whether different groups of students achieve differently but this is not a regular part of its work. As a result, staff are not immediately clear whether a trend is emerging.

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 receives a range of data about each student's achievement history in Regents exam passes and credits already gained at previous schools. This information acts as a baseline profile of individual's learning needs. The school immediately works out with students how many credits they need for graduation and how they can go about getting them. This includes earning college credits alongside high school ones for students who

are able. Together with advisers and teachers, students plan, organize and schedule their route toward graduation. In this way students are responsible for their own achievement and progress. By using a computerized system, the school can easily see who needs to learn what and when. Due to this individualized approach to planning learning, the school has an equally good understanding of the achievement and progress of special education students and English language learners. Students in danger of dropping out are counselled and most reasons are overcome. As a result, the school's drop-out rate is very low and most students graduate within two years.

While the school does disaggregate data by ethnicity and gender this is not routine. As a result, it cannot immediately say whether boys perform differently to girls. The school does know that Black and Hispanic students who often start with lower achievement make better progress because they graduate in the same amount of time as other students. It is difficult for the school to compare itself to similar schools because it is so unique in its nature. However, it does look carefully at its graduation rate and the number of students who succeed in college courses in comparison to other schools to learn from their success. Staff build their expertise in the use of data in regularly held faculty meetings.

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 school's one major goal is to ensure students get the credits they need to graduate in the fastest possible route. Interim goals are set in terms of the attendance and the number of credits individual students require each cycle to stay on track. All staff constantly reinforce the high expectations and aspirations for all students to succeed in their chosen career path, whether this is getting the job they want or going onto college.

All students who attend the school are in need of extra support to graduate successfully. Staff give up their time before and after school to give individual tutorials to support those students who find it more convenient to attend at these times. As a result, everyone is treated as an individual and the school does whatever it takes to make sure as many as possible graduate. Special education students and English language learners are fully included in all aspects of the school's work. They learn alongside their peers and benefit from the same targeted interventions as everyone else if it is seen necessary. Teachers' effective support ensures they succeed. Students are the school's first priority when giving feedback and sharing goals. To some extent the school relies on them sharing this with their parents. There are good opportunities for parents to learn about the school's work through regular communications. Any parent is welcome to discuss their children's progress with teachers. The number of parents who visit the school is small due to the short length of time students are at the school. Nearly all attend the graduation ceremony because they are so proud to see their children achieve something that they had started to think impossible.

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.

Assessment is an ongoing and constant feature of the school's work. The Learning Experience Activity Projects (LEAP) assignments guide learning from internships effectively. They make sure that students acquire the planned knowledge and skills at a high enough level to gain identified credits. Rubrics give students clear guidance on what they need to do to improve and help them engage fully with learning. Reflection sheets give further information about what is going well, any areas of concern and specific strategies to use to gain a higher level. Detailed comments on the reflection sheets in English language arts and social studies subjects are of a consistently good quality. The curriculum ensures that students cover the core curriculum they need to graduate while at the same time enabling them to develop their individual talents and interests. An extensive range and variety of programs and internships gives students a very wide choice of how they are going to achieve their graduation credits. Together advisers, teachers, guidance staff and students use data effectively to plan a personalized route toward graduation. Careful thought is given to setting up classes that are flexible enough to develop skills in different contexts so that a number of credits are gained.

Staffing, scheduling and budget decisions always respond to what students need in order to be able to attend classes and internships. Students take responsibility for making sure the credits they need fit in with their home and personal schedules. If a student finds it difficult to attend the internship at the time they are supposed to, procedures exist that enable them to negotiate adjustments and ensure schedules meet individual circumstances. This can sometimes involve students attending during the summer recess or at weekends if it is more convenient and possible. During the three registration days at the start of each cycle, students closest to graduation get first pick of the classes and internships to make sure they do not miss the course they need to graduate within the targeted two years.

Students who are graduating this year are justly proud of their efforts. For many it is the realization of a dream they never thought would happen. Students grow in confidence to become young adults who have high levels of self-esteem and the confidence to go into the world to make a successful and positive contribution. Every student has a career path and life purpose whether this is going to college, getting the job they want, setting up a successful business or becoming a more effective parent. Attendance continues to be a challenge but the school's efforts result in increasing attendance levels at internships and classes the longer students attend the school.

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 assistant principals are regular visitors to classrooms. They are highly visible throughout the school talking to staff and students about the school's work. As a result, they know where the school is and is not effective and are able to plan differentiated support for individual staff members and students. Regular professional development opportunities ensure teachers have up-to-date knowledge and expertise. The collegiate team approach ensures everyone is fully supported in developing their skills and so their effectiveness. Staff enthusiasm to do whatever it takes to ensure student success is infectious. All new staff either come with or quickly embrace the school's vision. Many staff are themselves graduates of the school and so share the school's mission. They enjoy being able to give back to the school that helped them become such successful adults.

There are good opportunities for teachers to collaborate formally with each other and with the well-organized guidance staff. The organization of classrooms into office space enables staff to work in a close-knit environment and to talk frequently throughout every day about how to best plan learning that meets the personal and academic learning profiles of all students. As a result, many classes dovetail in skills and content and instructional and guidance staff tailor classes and internships specifically to each student's needs. Teachers have some opportunity to visit each others' classes and advisers in the different internships to extend their knowledge of what each offers. This enables them to guide student learning highly effectively. These visits are not always formally scheduled and sometimes rely on teachers getting together to fit them into an already busy schedule. Extensive partnerships with local businesses and organizations make enriching contributions to student learning and enable them to graduate through real-life experiences. A small group of students are currently working with a charity organization to build homes and work in a local elementary school in New Orleans.

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 school has a clear vision about what it wants to achieve and which reinforces everyone's high aspirations for student success. This underpins the school's graduation goals for all students, set within very tight timeframes. Teachers hold themselves accountable for making sure students stay on track to reach their goals in the time allotted. This includes improving their attendance to classes and internships.

The school constantly evaluates the effectiveness of its work through a well-organized team structure and through informal discussions between staff. Advisers visit every internship and student at least once per cycle to ensure students are receiving full benefit from the experience. Students and resource providers (people and organizations providing the internships) complete a reflection sheet. This and discussions with advisers who coordinate the internships lead to ongoing adjustments from cycle to cycle. Students keep journals of their experiences and learning. Any issues raised are discussed during the twice weekly seminar meetings between advisers and students, and/or at other times if students request it. Particular focus is given to special education students, English language learners and those who have particular social and personal barriers preventing graduation. At the end of each cycle, staff discussions focus on the information received to evaluate which are more effective than others in helping students reach their goals and benefit fully from the experience. Teachers think carefully about the context they plan to use for teaching the skills in classes. This flexibility enables adjustments to be made during each cycle to respond to individual students' interest.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: City-As-School High School	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