



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Frederick Douglass Academy II

Middle/High School 860

**215 West 114th Street
New York
NY 10026**

Principal: Latasha Greer

Dates of review: November 13-14, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Anne Evanoff

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Frederick Douglass Academy II is a middle and high school with 450 students from grade six through grade twelve. The school population comprises 78% Black, 19% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% American Indian and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 3% 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 94.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 77 % eligibility.

The school shares a building with another high school and is currently housed on the first two floors of the site.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and the staff have a common vision and mission to promote student learning and positive life choices.
- The principal has gathered and analyzed student performance data from a variety of sources to understand the learning needs of students better.
- The school monitors and tracks well the progress of those students whose achievement has been identified as needing to improve.
- The professional development team and the principal provide effective support to new and seasoned teachers to improve their instructional practices.
- Administration and staff have high expectations for student learning.
- Procedures and management systems are in place to facilitate the smooth operation of the school.
- Students are well behaved and attendance is high because there are procedures in place to follow up absence that involve parents.
- The school has established relationships with a variety of outside organizations to enrich and enhance both the academic and personal growth of students.
- Parents and students respect and trust the principal and the staff and support the vision of the school.
- Parents feel comfortable sharing information about their children with staff.

What the school needs to improve

- Specify whole school goals in reading, writing and math to enable staff and students to set targets to achieve them.
- Continue to build the capacity of staff to set targets, plan and differentiate instruction, and monitor progress.
- Develop a tracking procedure to determine the effectiveness of interventions and to make adjustments to plans and instruction as required.
- Compare the progress and performance of students with those in similar schools.
- Identify and plan for those students who require an enriched curriculum and greater challenge.

Part 3: Main findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

There is a strong sense of community at Frederick Douglass Academy II. The principal knows all of the students by name and greets them in the hallways with a smile and asks after their well-being. Students view her as “an example of how it’s possible to succeed”. The school’s motto, “Without struggle, there is no progress” reflects the experience of the school’s namesake, Frederick Douglass. Students are keenly aware of their history and choose to attend this school because “we are all scholars and if we do the work, we can go to college.” Since the last review, staff have been engaged in strategic planning meetings and identifying next steps in the use of data. The math and literacy coaches are meeting teachers regularly to discuss student learning and to plan the curriculum. The administrative team recognizes that much work has still to be done in developing staff in using data to plan, track and monitor student learning. As a result, the principal has set some whole school goals around the use of interim assessments and monitoring students at risk of underachieving. The school has not yet stated whole school goals for improvement in the core subjects in terms that can be measured. The principal is putting into place a structure that will allow grade teachers to meet on a regular basis and focus on data for planning purposes.

The principal’s vision involves the whole staff in working together towards the common goal of fostering student growth and development. The principal is dedicated to working with the staff in a highly collaborative manner to create the best learning opportunities she can for all students. In order to do that efficiently and effectively, the principal analyzes performance data for patterns and trends and to identify those students who need more support. She uses the data strategically to make some key decisions about staff development, partnerships with outside agencies, and support services for those students who struggle. The inquiry team made a good start in using data to identify a group of “pushable” students who require additional support from among the ethnic groups in the school, and has taken gender into consideration. The team is also involved in planning staff professional development activities that promote the use of data to differentiate instruction and monitor progress.

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 principal and school data team have gathered and organized data from a variety of sources to understand better the school’s needs by class, grade and individual student as well as by ethnicity and gender groups. The principal has used an outside organization to

develop a student data tracking system for the school. School teams have analyzed the data successfully and made comparisons, from one year to the next and by cohort, to identify students at risk of underachievement, trends and patterns. As a result, teachers are better able to identify what their students can and cannot do. The principal has also been examining the data for other subgroups. The special education coordinator works effectively with teachers in monitoring learning goals with students and staff and provides a regular update to the principal on how much progress is being made. The school has begun to do similar work in analyzing the progress of its English language learners through the appointment of an English as a second language teacher, although it is too early to see the impact of this initiative yet.

The school has not yet compared its data to similar schools for the purposes of school improvement planning. The school has made good progress in implementing the New Visions Student Tracker system to monitor students who are off track for graduation and has placed the staff in a good position to set goals with students to help them meet graduation requirements. The professional development committee has identified where further support is needed to enable teachers to analyze data effectively.

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 principal has made setting goals based upon data, in a variety of areas, a priority for the school. From an examination of the data, the principal noticed that students do better in English language arts than they do in social studies. As a result, each subject coach is focusing on identifying what best practices look like across the curriculum and engaging staff in conversations about their practice. The data team recently reviewed information comparing the differences between students who pass the Regents Exams for college entrance and those students who do not. As a result, the principal has developed an action plan with key staff members and set a school goal to increase the number of graduates to 100%. A tracking system has been set up to monitor credit accumulation and achievement to ensure that no students fall between the cracks.

Both the inquiry team and the professional development committee have analyzed effectively various sources of data to identify groups of students who are a particular focus for academic improvement. Key staff members are in the process of developing individual intervention plans to identify specific learning goals with these students. The principal recognizes that not all teachers are as confident as they might be in using this data to set learning goals with individual students and this is an area for professional development.

Administrators and staff consistently communicate high expectations for behavior and academic achievement. Students are well aware of how much the staff cares and how their success is “the priority”. The principal, assistant principals and teachers have regular conversations with students about the importance of achieving their goals while posters, art work, and apt quotations provide constant reminders to reach ever higher. Parents are kept well-informed of the progress their children are making and have access to a grade website that reports on student progress at regular intervals. Parents feel that the school is “family oriented” and the first place to go when they need support. They are able to offer useful information to the school about their children’s needs and aspirations.

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 principal consistently uses data to make strategic decisions to achieve the goals of the school. The school has selected programs and courses that align with the State standards and incorporates assessment practices that provide meaningful interim data to raise student achievement. The principal is holding high school teachers accountable by carefully reviewing the scholarship report data at the end of each marking period and meeting with staff to discuss progress. She is also developing a plan to ensure that teachers from the same grade are meeting regularly to discuss instructional practice and student learning. Long term goals have been set for professional development to support all staff in developing their capacity to use data to group students according to learning needs, to set targets and reassess progress. The principal understands that the school has a distance to go in order to embed these strategies into everyday practice.

Teachers work very hard to provide interesting and compelling lessons for their students, but these practices are inconsistent from classroom to classroom. While there are many teachers who establish clear learning objectives and relate those objectives to real life experiences, there are also some who have not moved to this level of instruction. The school is involved with outside agencies to provide a focus on the arts and to integrate the arts across the curriculum but there is a need to extend these opportunities. In an effort to do that, each teacher has agreed to “give back” one period a week to provide more student choices in areas such as sports, various teams and clubs. There is a high degree of mutual trust and respect among all stakeholders. Attendance is high because students have a sense of how important it is “to get a good education and go to college”. The school follows up immediately with parents when students are not present.

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 the assistant principals visit classrooms regularly and provide verbal and written feedback to staff on what they observe. The principal, with the assistance of other faculty members, has developed a professional development map to address specifically areas for improvement. It is her personal goal to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to move the school forward. To this end, she provides frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet with the coaches to reflect on the quality of their teaching and planning. The school has established a “critical friends program” to support teachers in helping each other with topics such as classroom management and planning. New teachers find this program highly effective because it is tailored to meet their immediate individual needs.

The principal has established some effective procedures to ensure that the school runs smoothly. There is a concerted focus with students on “achieving your personal best” and “contributing to society”. Staff deal with behavior issues quickly and positively and students are held accountable for their choices. Guidance and social services provide additional support to students “struggling to find their way”. The school has established many partnerships with outside organizations, such as Chase, City College and

Community Art Works to extend and enhance student creativity. The principal continues to actively pursue further links within the city to provide additional opportunities for more students.

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 principal and the school community have a clear vision for the school and are implementing procedures and systems to move the school forward. The administrative team makes a special effort to ensure that the staff is focused upon, but not overwhelmed by, data. The school is engaging staff in planning that also provides support at each step of the journey. Subject coaches meet with grade and subject teachers on a regular basis and willingly model effective strategies. Although the school recognizes that there is still a long way to go, the staff members are optimistic and positive about where they are headed.

At present, teachers do not set sufficiently long-term and interim goals that are measurable, nor have suitable time frames for measuring student success and making adjustments. The principal is aware that goals need to be transparent and shared with all members of the school community including students and parents. The professional development team and the principal are planning teacher outcomes that include interim goals that are measurable in terms of their impact. The team is organizing professional development activities that are closely aligned with performance data and content areas that need reinforcement. The principal continues to promote the use of periodic assessments to measure the school's effectiveness, and to discuss appropriate interventions for individuals and various subgroups in key areas.

The development of a "student tracker" system is a major step in that direction. Because this is the first year in which interim assessments have been placed on an excel spreadsheet, teachers can see their data "at a glance". This enables them to make some strategic decisions about pull-out classes for students who are at risk of not passing the Regents Exam, and for students who can be pushed in middle school to improve in reading, writing and math. This strategic planning ensures that staff, students and parents not only understand where they have been, but also have the capacity to move forward effectively to achieve success for all students at Frederick Douglass II Academy.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Frederick Douglass Academy II (PS 860)	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 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		