



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

York Early College Academy

Middle School 284

**133- 25 Guy Brewer Boulevard
Queens
NY 11434**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

York Early College Academy is a middle school with 160 students in grades 6 and 7. The school population comprises 71% Black, 11% Hispanic, 1% White, 14% Asian and 3% Native American students. The student body includes less than 1% English language learners and less than 1% 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 97.4%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school opened in September 2006 and will add a grade each year until it reaches its full capacity as a grade 6 through grade 12, middle and high school. It shares the building with two other schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has established a culture in which all students believe it is “cool to succeed” and therefore the students are very motivated.
- Staff and students respond positively to the very high expectations set by the principal.
- An emphasis on high quality of teaching and specific support for students to meet their individual needs, has led to excellent academic results.
- Students’ enthusiastic attitudes are reflected in their excellent record of attendance.
- The relationships established by teachers and other staff ensure a positive and productive working environment.
- Common rituals which have been established across all classrooms support a steady pace of learning.
- Data systems have been developed to support differentiated instruction.
- The advisory system is very well constructed and is supportive of staff and students.
- Many students take part in the lively after school, Saturday morning and summer school program.
- The school is united in its vision that all students achieve sixty college credits by graduation.

What the school needs to improve

- Embed current data systems and consistently use data to track the progress of student sub-groups and the school’s improvement over time.
- Create a strategic plan with timescales and interim goals to co-ordinate the school’s development.
- Prepare for the school’s growth by formalizing and strengthening the collaborative systems currently operating.
- Develop and unify the system for student goal setting.
- Make students and parents formally aware of achievement goals.

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 school is only in its second year of development and the whole school community is very enthusiastic about its work and vision. Already, the school has turned in exceptionally good results in student achievement and work continues to raise these levels higher. The school is successful in developing good rapport with its students and in developing an engaging curriculum. The culture of the school has motivated students to achieve their best and most students access the extended opportunities for learning. These take the form of after school tutorials, Saturday morning school and summer school. Students and staff are committed to the long-term goal of ensuring that 100% of students achieve 60 college credits on graduation. Parents and caregivers see this as an incredible life chance for their children.

At the end of the first year, staff evaluated the work of the school and identified data as an issue for development. Staff have created their own system of learning maps to track student outcome. The principal and a small, dedicated team have worked with the Acuity system to make sure that it is accessible to all staff. Differentiation has increased and data shows the impact that new initiatives in literacy and math have had in successfully developing skills.

The school has a holistic view of education. Leaders have created a sophisticated advisory system that supports the students in cross discipline skills and in personal development. Advisory teachers conference with other teachers when there are issues of achievement. All teachers describe themselves as literacy teachers and are involved in the process of developing literacy skills in a structured way. Students and parents talk highly of the caring responsive attitude of the teachers and the principal.

The school is at an early stage in its formation and there is an emphasis on developing ideas to see how it can push students to achieve even better. The school has not yet fully embedded these. Areas for improvement relate to the formalizing of the very good work that it has already undertaken, such as creating a formal strategic plan and creating agreed procedures for collaboration. The principal has responded very fully to suggestions for improvement in the last Quality Review. As a result, more formal processes for staff observation and professional development are in place. Much improved data systems are now in place. Their streamlined use is an area for development. The inquiry team focuses its work on math development. Interventions in math now challenge all students. Their very good analysis of data has led to productive discussions with staff and a system of intervention which is sensitive to student need.

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

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

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The school has made significant effort to develop its use of data and now uses a wide spectrum, derived from different sources, to inform its work. Along with this, there has been a cultural shift in the thinking of teachers. The principal has organized a series of professional development days and retreats to reinforce data awareness. Staff now have a very good understanding of how to use data to reflect on practice and to improve learning and achievement. The work of a member of the advisory team is particularly noteworthy. She has developed the Acuity system in such a way that it is accessible to staff. Staff value the initiative because it gives very clear data about student progress. They have adjusted curriculum and instruction as a result to improve the achievement within their classes.

Staff have collaborated to develop a very good system of “student learning outcome maps” that combine class goals with a record of achievement in each goal. These are in the early stages of development but already produce very good information on progress. Analysis of group trends has resulted in the development of an empowerment group for girls. A detailed analysis of micro skills in reading and in math gave staff very clear information as to why students were not always achieving their best grades possible. This led to a number of well-considered initiatives which have been successful in raising achievement. The school has made effective progress in creating and using good systems of data. These are working well although the school has not yet fully integrated or embedded them into the planning systems of the school. Analysis of data to focus on different groups is not yet fully developed. This means that the schools very good system of interventions is not yet delivering its full impact. As the school is in its infancy, it has limited capacity to analyze trends based on past performance

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 academic vision of the school is clear that 100% of students should graduate with 60 college credits. Staff, students and parents share this vision and are proud of it. It drives the school forward and, as a result, it is “cool to succeed”. The school has agreed and set some benchmarked goals for improvement. Staff set individual and class goals for students in a number of ways. Teachers begin each lesson by writing the aim in a prominent place, followed by the learning outcomes. The consistency with which this and other rituals apply across lessons is one of the strengths of the school. Students know where they are and expectations are clear.

When students are working below their expected level, teachers make clear to them and to their parents what steps will improve their work and offer support to take those steps. The school offers tutorial support at the end of the school day and at certain points within the class. There are many opportunities for parents to work with the school to support

their children's learning. Parents of grade 7 students access information on line and there are plans to develop this system for grade 6. When a student is experiencing difficulty, parents meet with teachers as equal partners, providing useful information. The principal has created a sophisticated advisory system that supports students in academic as well as personal development. Students use this time to set and review goals. This provides good underpinning for the school's developments in this area. There are good systems developing to set appropriate goals and targets for students. The systems are not yet embedded and coherent across all disciplines. Students therefore are not taking full responsibility for their learning needs within a unified system.

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 principal is a leading practitioner and sets high standards for lessons. There is an emphasis on good differentiation, but the school is committed to continual improvement in this area and is always seeking out new strategies to enhance what is already in place. As well as a very good use of data to scrutinize levels of achievement, staff gather data on learning styles and different intelligences. The information feeds directly into lesson planning. There are several examples of visual ideas supporting students with different learning styles. Work is well matched to student needs. As a result, students are engaged in learning and most lessons have very good pace and a good variety of learning tasks. Skills of collaboration are not so well developed as some other skills. The principal trusts her staff and expects the best from them. She uses the budget well, for example through providing good resources such as differentiated textbooks.

Students and parents speak highly of the caring and supportive attitude of the teachers. They find that teachers respond swiftly to any queries and concerns and have a high opinion of the fairness, warmth and capability of the principal. The school's record of achievement in formal assessment is excellent. The teaching and support through the wide variety of after school and Saturday morning activities is an effective addition to the good work carried out in the more formal lessons. The school has a very good record of attendance. This results not only from the motivation of the students and their parents, but also from very tight procedures for monitoring attendance, and from a number of initiatives such as the principal's honors board, giving attendance high profile.

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.

Two things underpin the school's good development in building its capacity: the powerful vision for the school and the data based reflection undertaken by all staff. There is regular observation of classes by the principal and by peers. Teachers have improved because of the advice and support that they receive and are very clear as to what is required of them. Faculty takes the lead from the principal by focusing on their own roles as learners. The school aims to bring on all of the learners and is constantly developing its strategies to achieve this. Staff have a professional attitude to their own

learning. The principal ensures that professional development is appropriate and links to the evidence of student learning. Recently staff identified issues with literacy and bought into the SRA (McGraw Hill) system. They evaluated their work against student achievement and this led to further professional development. Student results and teacher observation show that this has been a worthwhile initiative.

New teachers start their induction with their interview. At this point, they learn the goals of the school. Thereafter they undergo a series of formal observations and meet together with their mentor to evaluate their work against agreed criteria and to plan for improvement. It is evident that the systems in the school help the teachers to improve. Even though it is a small school, a handbook and weekly staff information papers ensure that procedures are clear and, as a result, the school runs smoothly. The centrality of the advisory system means that students who are at risk in any way are swiftly identified and supported. The school has a particularly effective relationship with New York City University. Tutors and support for creating learning templates comes through this source and it has been of value to students who benefit in English language arts and math. York College tutors are involved in supporting many students and staff benefit from input to their professional development.

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 school is growing and staff are enthusiastic. They are developing different ways to work with students so that they can find the best systems and interventions. A great deal of good work is propelling the school forward and evidence shows that student achievement continues to improve. The school states its goals for the year and staff have concentrated their energy in developing good data systems to evaluate and analyze their work. Staff check progress and make sensible decisions to change direction if the results show that there are problems.

The school aims to establish a system of evaluation for all of its students. Students are very clear that they will know if there are issues in their work and that they will then have opportunities to resolve them. Staff alert students to this and to their future targets in a number of ways and have piloted work with individual learning plans for all students. This has proved to be unwieldy and as yet there is no clear system to replace it. Students know, however, that they are expected to move up by at least one grade level each year. The school unites in its vision to achieve 60 college credits by graduation and its work focuses on developing excellent teaching and learning and an excellent supportive ethos. The school's plans for development are not yet drawn together in a strategic plan with interim goals and timescales that makes it difficult to track progress throughout the school year.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: York Early College 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 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