



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Concord High School**

**High School 470**

**109 Rhine Avenue  
Staten Island  
NY 10304**

**Principal: Ron Gorsky**

**Dates of review: April 16 - 17, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Florence Olajide**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Concord High School is a high school with 124 students from 10 through grade 12. The school population comprises 33% Black, 40% Hispanic, and 27% White students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 40.3% of the students enrolled and girls account for 59.7%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 72%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 48% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The outstanding leadership of the principal and dedication of the staff have helped to create a haven where students are given a second chance at success.
- The school provides students with a very attractive and stable learning environment in which they feel safe and emotionally secure.
- It communicates very high expectations to student in relation to their conduct, academic performance, and attendance and students rise to meet them.
- Students are provided with excellent guidance and support, which are highly successful at motivating them to re-engage with learning.
- It has developed robust data analysis systems and these are used very effectively to provide students with the right support to ensure their success.
- It sets very clear and measurable goals for improvement which are firmly focused on accelerating students' progress enabling them to graduate from high school.
- It provides students with a highly tailored, flexible and individualized curriculum, which meets their needs, interests and accommodates their life circumstances.
- Data is used very effectively to make appropriate management decisions in relation to staffing, professional development and scheduling.
- Systems for promoting good attendance are very rigorous and the staff work tirelessly to ensure that students attend school regularly.
- It is very good at using all its resources, including very successful partnerships with outside entities, to enhance the curriculum on offer.

### What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the analysis of sub-group data is more thorough, particularly in relation to gender and ethnic groups.
- Increase the involvement of staff and students in goal setting by providing them with opportunities to create their own personal or professional development plans.
- Devise systems for regularly revising whole-school goals to bring them into closer alignment with the baseline data on individual students.

## 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, assistant principal and staff have created a very positive learning environment, which promotes high aspirations for students. Students are highly appreciative of the care, dedication and motivation provided by staff. As one student explained, “we are not a number, they care about us”. Since the last quality review, the school has significantly improved its data analysis. It uses the information very effectively to make decisions about improving provision so that students can make accelerated progress. Resources are managed efficiently and as a result, students are provided with a very flexible curriculum and an extensive choice of subjects. This significantly increases their chances of success. Students receive excellent personal and academic guidance to ensure their attendance is good and to keep them on track towards achieving their goals.

Although data is analyzed for trends and patterns within each cohort, analysis in relation to gender and ethnic groups is not rigorous enough. The school is very clear about what it wants to achieve with each cohort of students and it sets very clear measurable goals for individuals, and at whole-school and subject level. It is extremely good at using the data to review students’ progress in relation to their goals and adjusting their individual plans accordingly. However it does not yet revise the whole-school goals to bring them into closer alignment with the baseline data on each cohort. Teachers are meticulous about producing individualized learning plans for students just as the administration are about devising whole school professional development goals and plans for staff. However, neither staff nor students have sufficient opportunities to personalize these plans. Teacher’s confidence in using technology, particularly to make teaching more student-centered and interactive has improved over the last year. Teachers use two computerized, on-line programs, which are easily accessible to students and their parent to provide students with on-going feedback about their progress. The inquiry team has focused on understanding how students learn best and on capturing qualitative data about their progress. Teachers are using this information to modify their teaching styles.

### **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 uses a range of assessment tools very effectively to gather data about students’ performance and progress. A considerable amount of work has been done in the past year to improve the quality of the data collected and more importantly its use.

The data underpins significant decision making processes in relation to scheduling, staffing, support and intervention, curriculum and instruction. Staff use the information gathered very effectively to fine-tune the curriculum in minute detail to meet each student's needs.

The school concentrates its analysis on the performance of each cohort. It carries out a thorough assessment of students' performance on entry so that it can measure their progress against this when they leave. It then reviews their performance on a six weekly cycle and analyzes the data systematically to get a school wide view of their progress.

The data is analyzed for trends in the performance of ethnic groups across subjects, special education students and English language learners, but not for gender groups. Neither does the school compare ethnic groups across different academic years. It is therefore not picking up on some emerging patterns in relation to these groups. The school believes that poor attendance is the main impediment to students' success. It therefore analyzes attendance data regularly and meticulously and this information is used to make critical decisions about scheduling and the placement of students. The school also analyzes its dropout and graduation rates to track improvements over time.

While the principal and assistant principal have been the main drivers for the improvements in data analysis, many other staff have collaborated to build up the current database. The administration team ensures that each teacher understands not only the data in relation to the students they teach, but also how this compares to performance in other subjects. The school's current data shows that the improvements to how data is analyzed and used are having a positive impact on students' progress.

**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 sets very clear and measurable goals for each cohort of students. These are focused firmly on improving attendance and students' performance. Staff are fully involved in a comprehensive evaluation process that leads up to identifying goals, and in subject teams, devising action plans for implementing them. The school has very clear protocols for admitting new students and at this point it sets out its very high expectations. In consultation with each student and their parents, an individual transition plan is devised. These include very specific goals based on each student's baseline assessment. They also map out, on a term-by-term basis, what students need to achieve in order to graduate. However, this very good practice falls short of allowing students to produce their own action plans on how to achieve the agreed goals.

The school's high expectations are reinforced through a strong message that success is attainable. Students are provided with numerous opportunities to achieve recognition and success is constantly celebrated through awards and rewards. As explained by one student, "teacher's go out of their way to show you that they are proud of you when you do well". High quality displays of students' work adorn walls around the school. This significantly boosts students' confidence and morale. The school works very closely with parents and strongly encourages them to participate in their children's education. For example, parents have to attend a meeting where information is shared before report

cards handed over. To facilitate their understanding of their children's progress, the school offers workshops to parents on how to understand a transcript.

**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 outstanding.**

The school excels at tailoring the curriculum to students' individual needs and circumstances. Subject options are changed often in response to data about students' performance and evolving needs. This calls for flexible scheduling, which the school manages in an extremely resourceful manner. In doing this, the principal maximizes the skills of each member of staff and the school's links with numerous external organizations, to provide as wide a range of interesting subjects as possible. Several teachers are licensed to teach more than one subject, and this information is used when scheduling options. Information about attendance patterns is also used to make decisions about scheduling subjects, classes and the programs of individual students. Consequently, the school provides students with ample opportunities to choose from a menu of options to suit their personal circumstances. A range of enrichment activities including themed days and sports tournaments complement subject options, such as astronomy and culinary arts. Students particularly like school visits to museums and other places of educational interest because these bring their studies to life.

Students note that teachers often use technology to make instruction more participatory and to engage their interest. Nonetheless, its use to differentiate instruction remains an improving area. Students are provided with very good opportunities to demonstrate their learning through different assessment tasks, which take into account their preferred learning styles. The school runs an, "Adopt-a-child" program in which named members of staff are responsible for the pastoral care of a specified number of students. Adoptive "parents" follow up on the academic and personal progress of each student for which they are responsible. This personalized care helps to build trusting relationships between students and staff. The school does not tolerate tardiness or poor attendance and follows up on these rigorously. Good attendance is recognized and celebrated and students and their parents are also rewarded, for example through group trips.

**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 administration team monitors instruction frequently and uses the information on a continuous basis to direct the focus of professional development activities. Assessment data is analyzed by subject and shared with teachers so that they have an extremely good understanding of the impact of instruction on students' performance and progress. The school makes very good use of the information it collects to devise an appropriate plan to address common issues across the school. However, teachers do not have individual action plans for their own professional development. Mentors and coaches provide individual teachers with additional support in specific areas. Teachers have

good access to courses and workshops and opportunities for intervisitations within the school and to other schools. They are also provided with good guidance on how to derive maximum benefit from these learning experiences. There are suitable procedures to ensure that new staff receive good support through an appropriate induction program. This includes the allocation of a mentor as well as a peer “buddy” within the school.

The school’s guidance and advisory services provide students with exceptional care and support. An attendance team meets weekly to discuss students considered to be at risk of failure and to take preemptive action to keep them on course to graduate. The adopt-a-child program ensures that each student has at least one member of staff in whom they trust and can confide if they are experiencing any difficulties. Students are absolutely clear about the school’s expectations of their conduct and they return the respect that staff afford them. Staff manage behavior consistently and students are held accountable for their actions. This ensures good behavior and a safe environment for all. The school has several successful and productive links with external organizations which it uses extremely well to bolster student’s personal and academic development. A grant via a community based organization funds two extra counselors to service students and another community organization provides on-site careers guidance for 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 well developed.**

The principal has very high aspirations and a clear vision to raise achievement and the school’s profile within the community so that it becomes a school of first choice. To this end, there are robust structures for reviewing annual goals and using the information to plan for the following year. These involve all staff in reviewing and evaluating the entire year’s data and other qualitative information in order to identify areas of strength and those needing further development. The school applies the same rigor to reviewing the progress of each student. Weekly cross departmental meetings utilize all the data available about each student to make informed decisions about how best to revise their schedules and meet their needs. Subsequently, students are allowed to shorten or lengthen the timescales within which they can achieve their goals depending on their personal circumstances. What the school does not yet do is to revise the whole school goals to reflect the adjustments made to each individual’s schedule.

The school monitors the impact of professional development activities through regular feedback meetings with mentors and coaches. It crosschecks the data to evaluate the impact of instruction on the progress of each cohort. In addition, it carries out numerous surveys to gather information about the effectiveness of all its services and to check for students’ satisfaction. This information is used extremely well to make strategic decisions about staffing, scheduling and to modify the curriculum. For example, in response to the number of students who needed to gain additional credits in English language arts this summer, the school has just created two parallel classes in the subject to provide students with more flexibility. This is allowing students to switch between the classes on a day-to-day or weekly basis in order to learn the specific skills and knowledge that they need in order to graduate.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Concord High School</b>	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>				<b>X</b>	

<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>				<b>X</b>	

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