



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

New Day Academy

Middle-High School 245

800 Home Street

Bronx

NY 10456

Principal: Daisy Fontanez

Dates of review: May 27 – 28, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Mary Crampsie

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

Overall evaluation

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The New Day Academy is a middle-high school with 408 students from grade 6 through grade 11. The school population comprises 46% Black, 52% Hispanic 0.5% Asian and 0.5% White students. The student body includes 9.8% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 85.3%. The school is in not receipt of Title 1 funding.

The New Day Academy is in its third year, and will graduate its first high school class in 2009. The new principal is in her first full year in post. The school shares a site and has restricted facilities.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and administration lead by example and combine clarity of vision with excellent communication skills to drive school improvement.
- School leaders and faculty gather a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data to identify and improve the performance and progress of all students.
- The school has developed its own innovative assessment practice as well as incorporating established diagnostic tools to track student progress.
- Self and peer assessment are encouraged and students prepare and defend portfolio presentations to organize and articulate learning.
- The principal has made careful strategic staffing, resourcing and scheduling decisions which clearly support improved student achievement.
- School leaders have created a culture of professional engagement and learning, closely aligned to the goals of the school.
- Parents and students are confident that teachers have high expectations and feel well informed about what they need to do in order to improve.
- The school has developed very effective partnerships with a wide range of outside entities to support the academic and personal growth of students.

Areas for Improvement

- Extend data analysis and interpretation to include close attention to gender and all groups of interest and to make comparisons with other schools.
- As the school grows and student numbers permit, take opportunities to provide an even broader curriculum, including the arts.
- Continue professional development on differentiation strategies to ensure that all teachers plan specific interventions to address identified needs.
- Utilize the data gathered to refine strategic goals for student's projected achievement, based on previous performance.
- Ensure that all action plans, and long and short-term goals and are specific, contain measurable success criteria and have agreed timeframes.
- Build on work to ensure that teachers are able to analyze the impact of intervention strategies.

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 part of a coalition of schools committed to the innovative philosophy of portfolio education. As part of the Design Your Own (DYO) research project, the school has designed its own assessment rubrics. In response to the previous Quality Review and the demands of Regents examinations, the school has adapted its assessment framework to align with State standards. The principal has detailed data, tracking student progress in all core subjects and for each grade. The assistant principals are responsible for monitoring the middle and high schools. As a result, school leaders and faculty understand the data, can interrogate it closely and know exactly how well most students are performing. Analysis does not include close attention to gender groups to identify any significant trends and patterns. The effective inquiry team carefully tracks the progress of those students in greatest need of improvement. At the heart of the school is an advisory program. Teachers know their students well and there is a strong commitment to personalized education that prepares students for graduation and supports them in making a meaningful contribution to their community.

A key component of the school's innovative practice is the portfolio process. This is supported by 'Habits of Mind', a program which invites students to consider evidence, perspective, connections, supposition and relevance. Students present their portfolios annually, both orally and in writing. All teachers sit on portfolio committees and examine students who defend their presentations. This provides students with regular experience of articulating their thinking. The school is currently experimenting with digital portfolios.

There has been good progress since the last review. The principal has made a number of strategic decisions which have had a positive effect. The DYO assessment plans now explicitly state goals and strategies and link to success criteria. The school tracks and monitors performance carefully and is able to provide objective data to demonstrate clear progress in relation to value added. They do not compare performance and progress with similar schools, but do have close links to other schools with a portfolio culture.

Training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of data to inform planning are well developed. The principal and administration have developed a culture of professional inquiry and enthusiasm for learning. Students believe that their teachers have high expectations of them. The school works hard to involve parents and caregivers in their children's education, although there are parents who are hard to reach. The principal and the administration lead by example, and are widely respected. The school has developed a number of effective partnerships to support the personal and academic growth of students.

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.

School leaders gather and generate a wide range of data that is well organized and accessible. They have an objective and constantly updated understanding of how well most students are achieving. Many students enter the school with low prior achievement. To address this, the school is structured to allow a favorable student teacher ratio. This enables teachers to know their students very well. Grade level teams meet weekly to share and analyze qualitative and quantitative data. Teachers carefully identify and describe the learning needs of special education students. The school tracks their progress effectively and reviews individual education plans (IEPs) regularly. As a result, their progress is in line with students generally. English language learners also made considerable gains in achievement, and no student from this group was held back to repeat a grade, which was a personal goal for the principal.

School leaders are aware of and closely monitor trends in relation to special education students and English language learners. However, the school does not yet pay sufficient attention to understanding the performance of groups such as higher achieving students and Hispanic girls. Although "only beginning to pay attention to this," a key strategy for the latter group is to address literacy. For higher achieving Hispanic girls and students generally, the school works hard to develop student's ability to think critically. This is an important strategy in preparing students for college. Every student has a detailed profile and narrative reports from teachers.

The principal is committed to learning from schools which share the portfolio philosophy, whilst knowing that her students face challenges not faced by the original schools in the network. She pays less attention to comparisons with similar schools. Training, management systems and structures are all established. Much has been accomplished and the work now needs time to become embedded.

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 school leadership and staff work well together and set goals for improvement collaboratively, although these could be even more rigorous and objective. The cabinet is a highly effective leadership team. Academic content teams meet regularly to scrutinize student work. Grade level teams meet weekly to monitor student progress and development. The work of the mentoring team is greatly valued. There is a detailed focus on the needs of each student. Teachers give students in-depth, quality feedback, and this informs future goals. The school clearly identifies students in greatest need of improvement, and the inquiry team closely tracks their progress. Many students enter middle and high school with low achievement. On arrival to the school, 90% of the current grade 11 students had scored Level 1 or 2 in English language art tests and 84% scored similar levels in math. Just over half of the first middle school cohort had similarly low

levels of prior achievement. School leaders can demonstrate objectively that those who attend regularly make significant gains.

The principal is an effective communicator and shares whole school goals with all members of the community. Teachers have high expectations of students, who feel well informed about how they can improve. Parents confirm that the school works hard to communicate with them and invites them to share information to support their children's progress. The level of parental involvement is a concern and the school is working to improve this. Some communications such as the 'Habits of Mind' newsletter, might be more visual and easier to read.

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 school has a core curriculum and assessment framework that supports teachers to collect detailed data about student progress. Work is graded against an assessment rubric designed by the school, which provides a vehicle for discussion with students. Each student has a supervisor, who co-ordinates information across subjects. Teachers constantly update and review relevant "pass or fail" information and formative data during grade level meetings. They use this to formulate new goals. The school is still not at full student capacity, and leaders plan that the curriculum, currently constrained by student numbers, will become broader and provide even more opportunities for the arts. The school groups students by achievement in enrichment classes and there are many opportunities to expand their horizons.

The principal has prioritized scheduling to encourage regular professional dialog. Student performance is reviewed at weekly grade and subject level meetings. During these meetings, teachers select students for case analysis and all their data is reviewed around six times a year. Lessons are engaging and instruction is motivating. There are sensitive strategies to include the many over age students. The school is beginning to address differentiation and training has taken place on multiple intelligences and Bloom's taxonomy. The principal is working to ensure that differentiation is consistently embedded in classroom practice. This remains an area for development.

In addition to careful hiring and scheduling, the principal models professional learning by having a coach herself. There is trust and respect between all staff and students. The principal has turned the comparative youth of the staff to advantage by creating an exciting ethos of professional engagement. Teachers talk about learning and share a strong moral commitment to promoting student well-being. Attendance is a significant issue, but effective systems and procedures are in place leading to improved rates.

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.

There are frequent formal and informal classroom observations by the administration. The principal values and nurtures her young staff and provides them with detailed feedback. In

doing so, she models the conversations she wants them to have with their students. These professional conversations are also an opportunity for class teachers to let the administration know what they are learning, and encourage the development of a collaborative professional culture. This is a central aim of the DYO project. Teachers contrast the “incredible” level of support they receive to previous experience. They say that the principal is accessible and listens well. All decisions regarding professional development are taken strategically. Teachers confirm that professional development is of good quality and valued. The principal has employed a mentor through the National Association for Excellent Teaching to support teachers. Teachers appreciate her work greatly. There are opportunities for intervisitation, conferences and visits to other schools committed to the portfolio culture. Procedures for induction are well developed and supported by mentoring.

The school aligns youth development and student services very effectively around academic and personal goals. The school runs smoothly and discipline is generally good, although students expressed some concern about “the lack of team spirit” in relation to team games. A growing number of partnerships support the work of the school.

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 development of assessment practice was a huge goal for the school last year, as was the advisory system. Taken together these are now highly effective in informing goal setting at a school wide and individual level. The “Habits of Mind” and portfolios are a strength of the school and a major vehicle for delivering its goals. Annual staff retreats result in setting new goals and establishing teams to work on those goals in the following year.

Teachers use periodic assessment and diagnostic tools to identify common mistakes in student work and take strategic decisions to improve outcomes. They realized they had to infuse the curriculum with Regents style questions and did so effectively. Students find Global History a challenge and teachers have found ways to scaffold learning. They are piloting diploma requirement worksheets in grades 7 and 9 and are purchasing new technology. The school monitors credit accumulation and Regents examination scores carefully. For students missing credits, there are transcripts that form a permanent record so they are aware of their position. The school schedules credit recovery classes during the school day because some students work after school to help their family. This provides students at risk with a better opportunity to succeed.

Interim goals are set, monitored and adjusted, but at present, some of these are too general. Teachers are not able to say with conviction exactly which strategies have been effective and why. Not all plans contain specifically measurable, interim targets with clear timeframes, making it more difficult for the school to evaluate and monitor progress towards its goals. The vision and commitment of the principal are evident. Under her leadership, the whole school community is clear about future development and how to effect change.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The High School for Teaching and the Professions	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