



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Pelham Preparatory Academy

**High School 542
925 Astor Avenue
Bronx
NY 10469**

Principal: Jane Aronoff

Dates of review: October 22 - 23, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Bruce Berry

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Pelham Preparatory is a high school with 489 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 41.8% Black, 40.5% Hispanic, 5.3% White, 5% Asian and 7.4% other students. The student body includes 3.5% English language learners and 5.9% special education students. Boys account for 43% of the students enrolled and girls account for 57%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 91%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 60% eligibility.

The school shares its building with four other schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides supportive and strong leadership in driving the vision of the “High School with a College View.”
- Teachers work well in teams to plan curriculum and instruction.
- The school has thorough data systems to track the progress in achievement of all students in the school.
- Teachers, students and parents share very high expectations of student achievement
- Parents are extremely pleased with the education and care their children receive from the staff of the school.
- The school has developed very productive partnerships, which are leading to high-quality academic and social enrichments for the students.
- The students receive excellent academic and social advice and guidance from the teachers and guidance counselors in the school.
- The Student Union provides very good opportunities for students to demonstrate community engagement and responsibility.

What the school needs to improve

- Further improve the use of data to analyze and update the progress of ethnic and gender groups and other specific groups in the school.
- Continue to improve periodic goal setting for individual students, classrooms and subjects to ensure continuous progress is made in raising achievement levels.
- Improve the consistency in the differentiation of instruction and activities to ensure all students have access and engagement in their learning.
- Further improve the alignment of professional development policy and practice to the outcomes of data analysis.
- Continue to improve strategic planning to include interim goals for student and teacher outcomes in order to monitor progress in meeting whole school 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 well developed.

As a result of the last Quality Review, the school has very good data systems for monitoring student progress and to looking at the progress of some subgroups at the end of each year. The reasons for any underperformance in a particular group are looked into and plans are made to address the issues in the following year. However, data is not always used effectively to monitor the progress of ethnic and gender groups and other specific groups over time. Parental involvement in the school has improved over the past year.

The principal provides very strong leadership in driving the agenda for continuous improvement. Teachers work well together to provide interesting instruction and support for students' learning. The curriculum and higher level honors courses effectively challenge and interest the students. All the students in the school make commendable progress as they move through the school. As a result, students achieve very good results in Regents tests and the graduation pass rate is very high. Most students are successful in gaining college places. Efficient and effective procedures in the school lead to a calm and orderly environment for learning to take place. Students receive excellent support for their academic and social well being from the guidance and advisory staff. The school does not, at present, consistently set interim goals for individual students, classrooms and subjects. There is inconsistency in the use of differentiation in instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students. The school does not, yet, align professional development to the outcomes of data analysis. The school's inquiry team has met and is planning the research projects to be undertaken.

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 thorough data systems that provide progress indicators for the achievement of all students in the school. Period grade marks are collected electronically and analyzed to give a profile of the progress of each student. Senior leaders monitor credit accumulation and Regents test results regularly to ensure that students make the required progress. As a result of these measures, many students move up a level in English language arts by the end of their first year and the overall graduation rate is very high. The school has a clear understanding of the progress of special education students and English language learners. Data shows that the effective support and carefully targeted instruction ensures these students make very good gains in progress. English

language learners are taught in general education classes and make good progress alongside the other students.

The school monitors the progress of most groups and subgroups in the school on an annual basis. At present, the school does not periodically analyze the progress of ethnic and gender subgroups in order to check their progress over time. Senior leaders monitor the annual progress of classes, the whole-school level and all subjects. The high pass rates in the Regents tests and the very high graduation rate over the last two years give clear evidence of the exceptional progress students make. As a result, the school's performance is extremely high when compared with its peer schools. The school also compares its own performance with that of another school in the same building with similar graduation rates.

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.

Senior staff and teachers collaborate to agree annual plans and goals for student improvement. These plans include subject goals which provide a measurable challenge for student improvement over the academic year. Each student has very specific long-term goals for accumulating enough credits and passing the required number of Regents tests to achieve graduation. Over the past two years, the school has successfully met its goals, with a high percentage of students graduating and gaining a college place.

Some subject teachers set short-term goals that help students with their next steps of learning. However, there is inconsistent practice across subject areas in setting periodic goals for individual students and in setting classroom and subject interim goals in order to check progress made in meeting annual goals.

Students in greatest need of improvement make excellent progress through carefully focused instruction and support. For example, special education students are taught in effective self-contained and collaborative classes and are provided with individual support from the resource room teacher and in the after school programs, and English language learners receive invaluable daily support in line with their levels as identified from external tests.

After the first semester, guidance counselors meet with all students to discuss their progress to date. Those students requiring more credits are placed on an effective credit recovery program. The program includes additional tutoring in all subjects and support from senior students and teachers through the Student Union. All members of the school community share the ambition of helping all students to gain a place at college. These very high expectations of staff, students and parents create the momentum for continuous school improvement.

The school's thorough communication systems provide parents with high-quality information about their children's progress and events at the school. Parents receive valuable data about their child's progress in credit accumulation and in their subject grades during open school sessions. In addition, parent and teacher meetings provide opportunities to share information that helps students to improve their progress.

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 stimulating curriculum provision is closely aligned to New York State standards and subjects follow the Regents curriculum. However, teachers add depth to each topic to challenge students and to accelerate their progress. The school provides a wide range of curriculum opportunities which includes elective courses and enrichment subjects which motivate students and enhance their opportunities. For example, students on accelerated programs can take elective courses such as chemistry, forensic and advanced biology, pre-calculus and statistics. Music is offered and students can join the campus band, which serves all five schools within the building. In addition, one teacher offers tuition in the new technology used by disc jockeys and the business side of the music industry.

Some teachers provide high-quality differentiated instruction and ensure students are given clear goals about their next steps for learning. High-performing students are successfully challenged through the curriculum and the instruction they receive. There is not, however, a consistent approach to the differentiation of instruction and activities, so not all students are fully engaged in their learning. Strategic use of budgeting, staffing and scheduling effectively supports the curriculum, instruction and student performance. For example, some scheduling involves students taking advanced placement calculus and a technology bridge program in another school and arts classes are available in school and at a local college.

The impact of teachers’ instruction is carefully monitored through the analysis of data at the end of each marking period. The principal also requests a written evaluative commentary from teachers for each student failing their class.

There is a very respectful and trusting culture in the school. Students and parents have high praise for the education and care given to them by all the staff in the school. Students feel confident in approaching teachers and guidance counselors about any academic or social issue. All the students are able to attend the Student Union after school, where senior students and teachers volunteer their time to provide effective one on one support for students.

Meticulous procedures are leading to high levels of attendance throughout the school. Daily absence lists are printed and phone calls made to parents. Meetings with parents at school or follow-up home visits occur in cases where there are major concerns about attendance.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

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

The principal and assistant principal make formal and informal visits to classrooms and provide teachers with valuable feedback that enables them to improve their curriculum and instructional planning. Teachers are provided with helpful support from senior staff and coaches to improve their instruction and an external organization provides professional development for teachers in a variety of subject areas. Teachers share the knowledge and

experience gained from the training. However, the school does not align the professional development policy and practice to the outcomes of data analysis. As a result, professional development is not sufficiently tailored to identified school needs. Teachers are given the opportunity to observe other teachers' instruction and are extremely positive about the impact this has on improving their instruction and in helping them gain useful experience. New teachers to the profession are provided with very good support by a mentor and a buddy teacher assigned to them.

During daily common prep time, teachers work in teams to plan curriculum and instruction and to monitor individual student progress. Students are sometimes invited to the meeting in order to plan programs for improving their achievement. As a result of this guidance and support, students make good gains. Parents are also invited in cases where there are major concerns about a students' progress.

Students receive high quality academic and social guidance. Guidance counselors regularly meet with students to plan their programs and schedules to obtain their credits and Regents passes. Senior students demonstrate community engagement and responsibility by giving help and guidance to younger students through their work in the Student Union. Students are encouraged to accept responsibility for their studies and for keeping good order in the school, which runs smoothly. Excellent partnerships provide valuable academic and social enrichments for the students. For example, a university runs classes for students to understand what college is like, chemistry laboratory sessions are available and a college tutoring program. There is also a program with the New York Police Department where students undertake the basic training of a police officer.

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's strategic planning has appropriate and measurable long-term improvement goals for each subject area. The subject goals reflect the school's vision for continually improving achievement. The strategic planning does not presently include interim goals for student and teacher outcomes. This makes monitoring of progress towards meeting long-term school goals more difficult, and their revision if necessary.

Teachers use the analysis of observations and a range of other relevant information to check on individual student progress meticulously. The progress of students failing in classes or subjects is carefully monitored and reported to the principal. Effective intervention strategies are implemented and result in improved student progress.

The principal collects a complete record of each student's progress in meeting graduation standards. She has meetings with each of the senior students to review their progress and programs to ensure graduation is achieved. School leaders and teachers regularly revise curriculum and instruction plans for individual students when a need is identified from the analysis of data. There is less consistency in the use of data to regularly monitor the impact on achievement of curriculum and instruction in classrooms and subjects. The whole school community shares the vision of the 'High School with a College View'. There is a common purpose and focus for achieving a college placement. As a consequence of all the school's considerable efforts, there has been a very high success rate over the last two years in meeting that goal.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Pelham Preparatory School (HS 542)	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 make 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	