



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Wings Academy

High School 684

**1122 East 180 Street
Bronx
NY 10460**

Principal: Wayne Cox

Dates of review: October 22 - 23, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Ronnie Young

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

Wings Academy is a high school with 554 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 43% Black, 51% Hispanic, and 1% White, 1% Asian and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 0.4% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 82.2%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 74% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The data analyst at the school ensures all school staff have a current and objective understanding of the progress and performance of students.
- The curriculum is broad, engaging and focused and provides a wide selection of creative and sports options along with core subjects at several levels.
- There is a very good atmosphere of mutual trust and warmth throughout the school between school leaders, faculty and students.
- The principal and his cabinet provide strong leadership with the capacity to continue effecting change.
- Behavior is good both inside and outside the classroom.
- School leaders, faculty and students have very high expectations of themselves and of each other.
- Students show high levels of enthusiasm for learning.
- Management responsibility has been devolved to curriculum department leaders, which has led to shared good practice and accountability.
- The school is quick to respond to needs revealed by data and has put in timely and effective intervention strategies for students.
- Staff show high levels of commitment to their students and are quick to embrace new ways of helping them to achieve.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve the use of data further to identify trends by ethnicity and gender and to compare the school's performance with similar schools.
- Extend differentiation in all classes by using more group and pair work and by introducing a variety of tasks and methods that best suit students' needs.
- Involve students more in setting their own goals, so they can take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Introduce opportunities for classroom teachers to observe each other, so best practice can be better spread.
- Continue to develop ways to increase parental involvement in the education of their children.

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 collaborative and community ethos of the school and its small size have facilitated its ability to move forward quickly. The principal has devolved responsibility to departmental heads who serve in the cabinet, along with the assistant principal, coach and data analyst. This allows decisions, accountability and good practice to be shared quickly and effectively. The appointment of a data analyst has simplified data analysis across the school and the use of computer technology has facilitated data collection for all staff. The school is less effective in tracking the progress by ethnicity and gender. The school has devised a curriculum that has added depth to its core by giving several levels for instruction, and breadth, with a wide range of electives and clubs in accordance with students' interests. It uses creative scheduling to allow every student to access appropriate intervention and to give opportunities for credit accumulation and recovery.

School plans benefit from timeframes and are measurable, although those for individual students have insufficient student input. Support for students and staff is very good; students have an effective advisory system in place, and teachers benefit from targeted and effective professional development, resulting in part from frequent and constructive lesson observation by school leaders. Although teachers work in teams, there is little opportunity for them to observe each other's classes, however. Differentiation has been introduced, with groupings for English language arts and math in the 9th grade, but many lessons are very teacher-led, with little opportunity for students to learn in their optimum style. Despite this, students are enthusiastic about learning. There are extremely high levels of mutual regard, respect and trust by all members of the school community, which make it a secure environment in which all students are given the opportunity to achieve to their full potential. Parental involvement in the education of their children is limited.

The inquiry team has met several times and is progressing well, focusing on level 1 achievers in the living environment Regents examination. Good progress has been made towards the recommendations in last year's Quality Review. The advisory system has been re-established and refined, placements in subject groups are based in available data, preparatory classes and credit recovery are now in place, as is specialist subject development at higher levels.

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 developed a very good system of data collection and analysis by using computer technology and by the appointment of a staff member to be the school's data analyst. The Data tool disaggregates external data into groups of interest to the school, including grade, subject, class, cohort, special education and English language learner. The school adds graduation rates and Regents rates, for this and for previous years. However, there is presently little breakdown of the performance of boys and girls relative to one another, or different ethnic groups, although this is planned for the future. When required, the analyst turns this data into regular user-friendly reports for school leaders and staff. Teaching staff use a further tool, Gradekeeper, which records each teacher's internal data such as student attendance, test scores, homework grades and class participation rates. Together, these provide an in-depth and broad knowledge of the performance and progress of students, both collectively and as individuals.

Cross-referencing takes place, for example, correlation between individual attendance and student achievement. Data is also used by guidance counselors who use progress checklists to identify students not meeting performance goals and to provide options for academic intervention. As yet, the school uses only those schools chosen by the City as peer schools for comparison, as it has not identified a school it considers sufficiently similar. School leaders and faculty feel comfortable using data as the analyst makes it easy to understand and the Gradekeeper has simplified their record keeping. The school provides on-going professional development, both internal and external, in the use of data and teachers new to the school have an introductory professional development session to introduce them to the school's data system.

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.

Goals are set collaboratively in most cases. For example, the recently formed accreditation committee, consisting of school leaders, teachers and guidance counselors, looks at ways of raising the graduation rate. Parents are involved via the parent teacher association and school leadership team, as are students via the latter. Departmental goals are set collaboratively at two-weekly meetings. All school goals have a time frame and are measurable. Teachers and the guidance counselors collaborate to set student goals, usually without the students being involved to negotiate goals or even to set their own. As a result, students are not fully engaged with their own progress. Sometimes they are long-term and vague with little guidance on how to achieve them other than by academic intervention classes and they are not always broken down into small steps.

All members of the school community have very high expectations of themselves and of each other. For example, the school holds an awards dinner each semester for the highest grades and an intermediate awards ceremony for achievement of any kind, including effort. These have acted as incentives for students to succeed and they vie for inclusion in these

events. The school makes great efforts for parents to be involved, including telephone calls and invitations to the school. Parents are requested to pick up report cards from the school rather than have them posted, so they can meet with and talk to their child's teacher. The parent teacher association, although small, is very active. However, the majority of parents show little interest in the education of their children, despite the school's best efforts. This is an ongoing challenge for the staff.

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 school is proactive in ensuring success for its students by fostering an environment which encourages their potential and treats them as individuals. It has put into place a curriculum that is broad, engaging and focused. As well as a range of electives based on student's interests, such as journalism, human rights, student government and current events, there are extensive opportunities for sport and creative pursuits such as basketball, softball and dance. These give all students a chance to show their talents and raise their self-esteem. The core curriculum has depth as well as breadth, with a range of advanced placement Regents classes as well as preparatory classes in English language arts, math, science and social studies. The school has made scheduling decisions which allow students the optimum opportunity to succeed in Regents examinations. For example, the Regents math test has been rescheduled so that students in 9th and 10th grade can now take it. Strategic staffing decisions are also made based on data. For example, because document-based essay writing was found to be weak for many students in history classes, English language arts teachers now work with social studies teachers in preparatory classes to improve those skills. Pacing guides and Gradekeeper ensure that core curricular approaches facilitate and provide meaningful data to raise students' achievement.

There is some differentiation in the school. For example, 9th grade students are grouped in classes for English language arts and math according to their 8th grade scores. However, within these classes, there is insufficient variety of teaching methods or tasks. All students tend to do the same thing at the same time, even though they may be working in groups or pairs. This leads to a lack of progress for some students. The school recognizes this as a priority in its quest for fitting teaching and learning around individual student needs. Attendance is taken very seriously and the school's procedures, which include daily telephone calls, have resulted in an attendance rate which is higher than the City average for high schools. Behavior is very good and there are high levels of mutual trust and high regard between staff, students and the school management.

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 sees his primary role as being the instructional leader of the school. Lesson observation, which is devolved to department heads and the assistant principal, are used as a tool to improve teaching and learning. As well as formal observations, which include pre- and post-observation conferences, teachers are observed informally up to three times per week. Feedback is usually given either verbally or in writing. Intervisitation between

department heads and their teams are common, either for lesson modeling or for monitoring and supervision purposes. This shared responsibility has allowed the spread of good practice, as well as bringing department teams closer together. Teachers would appreciate more opportunity to visit each other's classes so the decisions made in their team meetings can be seen in practice and evaluated jointly. The leadership learning support organization (LSO) coordinates professional development. This has developed a cohesive professional development plan with the principal, based on data, information from lesson observation and analysis of student and staff needs. The LSO also provides experienced specialist teachers to work with those in the school who lack experience, as is happening this year with the English as a second language staff. Professional development into the systems and standards of the school is a feature of the induction program, as is the provision of a mentor, usually the new teacher's department head. This system of targeted professional development has helped the school to focus on its priorities and address identified needs quickly.

Support for students is good. The guidance counselors are responsible for youth and personal development and support systems of students. The new advisory program provides students with individualized goal-setting based on their performance and progress data, although students are not as involved as they could be. Electives give a range of opportunities for students to support each other in activities such as peer tutoring and mediation. The school runs very smoothly because procedures and systems are clear and understood by all staff, students and parents, facilitated by comprehensive student and tutor handbooks. The discipline code is enforced consistently and students know and accept what is and is not negotiable. Students emphasize how safe they feel in 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 well developed.

The school's plans for students always include six-weekly, interim milestones, at the end of each making period and semester. All goals are measurable, and plans are revised if necessary in a timely fashion. Those for teachers are set and monitored at the two-weekly department meetings. This means department heads react very quickly to problems. The school uses periodic assessments routinely, including those developed by the dean, team leaders and counselors, to measure the effectiveness of student plans and interventions. The whole school is quick to revise plans and seek solutions when necessary. For example, when students had to graduate in only four years, the school responded quickly by setting up the accreditation committee which, after research, worked out a program of credit recovery and rescheduling to allow for fast acquisition of credits. The school is on a cycle of effective improvement and is continually changing the goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan. Teachers work in departmental groups to evaluate and revise those goals.

The principal's vision is for the school to be a "blue ribbon school", demonstrating excellence in all ways. He and the staff feel they are moving towards this steadily. To facilitate this vision, the school recognizes its need to focus on all students having their own individualized learning plan, starting with improved diagnostic assessment in all subjects. The principal and his devolved team provide a high level of leadership and inspiration to the rest of the staff, parents and students. A great deal of change has successfully been put into place in the last year. The school has the capacity to realize its vision with the continued support and collaboration of its community.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Wings Academy	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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	