



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Office of Accountability
2008-2009**

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Frederick Douglass Academy IV Secondary School

Middle School-High School 393

**1014 Lafayette Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: Marian Bowden

Dates of review: November 19 – 20, 2008

Lead Reviewer: George Wallace

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Frederick Douglass Academy IV is a middle school-high school with 530 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 87% Black, 11% Hispanic, 0% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 91.7%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 65% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped.

Most students are well-meaning, polite, willing to work and aware that they want interest, motivation and success from their time at school. Unfortunately there are few whole-school procedures that provide consistent high quality support across the school to promote encouragement, initiative and good progress. Where high levels of success occur, it is more a consequence of the assertiveness of the individual student or a product of the skills of individual teachers. Therefore students are generally very happy with many of their individual classes, where they feel that almost all teachers care about them, their work and welfare. Even so, the quality of teaching varies considerably from lesson to lesson. Senior leaders do not have a sufficiently comprehensive bank of walkthrough and formal lesson observation data to use to improve teaching generally and devise in-school professional development through small workshops, inter-visitations and grade and/or departmental team meetings. However, the Inquiry Team research program has identified a relevant project and already established procedures so that early findings will be available to the whole school by early February.

Senior leaders do not routinely analyze and use data to effect change across the school. The Comprehensive Educational Plan has some measurable goals, but no interim checkpoints where an evaluation of progress in the pursuit of the goals will occur. The plan also contains useful action plan commentaries for subject departments, but bar English language arts, no other department is clear about the specific strategies written into the plan that affects their teaching. Since there are no procedures for routine, rigorous and robust approaches to school self-evaluation the plan does not incorporate the outcomes of an audit of faculty professional development needs. Communication between senior leaders and faculty over school improvement issues and agreed procedures is poor. Consequently the links between data analysis, school goal setting, the identification of core professional development needs and the development of teachers' skills, especially with regard to technology use and differentiation are all missing. Since there is no culture of formal evaluation of the many different aspects of the work in a school, including students' work, then development is very rarely based on meaningful information. The development of well understood agreed procedures in the interests of student life in the school is poor because teachers are so rarely involved in discussions about policies and practice that will help secure the principal's vision as expressed in the school's clear and relevant mission statement.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Most teachers care for their students and their lessons largely reveal a safe and respectful environment in which nearly all students are willing to work.
- Hallways are bright with good quality displays and classrooms reflect the subjects that are taught in them also through good quality displays of rubrics, guidance charts, published display materials and students' work.
- Teachers keep assessment portfolios of students' work which are used with students and parents to explain individual student performance and some aspects of progress.
- The Inquiry Team has identified a good quality target population for its research and has identified a wide range of relevant short-term strategies required to undertake the research.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve the quality of communication throughout the school, for example, so that whole school proposals for development and improvement are discussed and explored ensuring that all teachers feel part of sharing and shaping of agreed policies and procedures.
- Improve the senior leadership's and faculty's collection of data as well as ensuring all staff know and understand how to analyze data so that the outcomes of the analyses can be used for differentiated planning, teaching and learning.
- Sharpen the whole school improvement planning process so that clear measurable goals are made and that the strategies to be used to reach the goals are a product of collaborative action at all levels in the school.
- Design a professional development program based upon an analysis of the needs of the staff in relation to the whole school goals and the strategies required to reach those goals.
- Extend the range of curriculum activities for students to include more support programs in school time and after school, and to include a much wider range of after school activities and trips to support and enrich the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of the way that teachers use data to track the performance and progress of individual students over time and how such data may be used to identify trends and patterns in performance as well as senior leaders' monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning on a frequent basis.

Part 3: Main Findings

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped.

The school has access to a wide range of student performance data as well as other forms of quantitative and qualitative information. However, there is little analysis of such information by school leaders or faculty and therefore it is rare for senior staff or faculty members to use data to identify sub-groups of students in individual classes, grades or school-wide. Senior leaders use ACUITY data to reveal overall performance of students in grades 6, 7 and 8, but do not analyze such data either by class or grade or over several years, either by grade or by student cohort. High school data is logged through student transcripts, but it is rare for senior leaders to look at teachers' tracking of student performance through the year. Therefore, in too many areas of the curriculum, there is no data analysis leading to patterns and trends in performance being identified for groups of student or by class or grade. For example, it became evident at least three months before the June Regents examinations in two separate math courses that a very high proportion of students were on course to fail. No strategy was put in place to try to remedy the situation, but planning for a summer school for remedial action was planned.

The main sub-group of students identified by senior leaders is those requiring special education. Their needs are addressed through the successful completion of their individual education plans. In addition, there are some examples of senior leaders evaluating student performance by subject and class, but this is rare. There is very little open exchange of information between senior leaders and faculty. Therefore, neither senior leaders, class teachers nor advisory period teachers have sufficient background information on the performance and progress of students to ensure that students understand their next learning steps in all their subjects. Too often the goals are little more than a list of the next content areas to be covered.

While some parents are content with the amount and quality of information they receive from the school about their child's performance and progress, there is a significant proportion who are extremely dissatisfied. Parents know to contact teachers directly, via e-mail or the telephone. Such communications are well received and valued, but formal structures across the school vary considerably between grades and therefore only some parents are content with the amount and quality of the information they receive. Generally, the school does not design, use or adapt tools to provide school leaders with good quality information to lead discussions with teachers or grades about the quality of teaching and effectiveness of students' learning. Where this occurs, it is much more by chance through individual skills of some teachers in their statistical analysis of their class data.

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 underdeveloped.

Whole school performance goals are set by senior leaders and developed in the Comprehensive Educational Plan. However, few teachers know these goals or how they were set, since there are no specific grade level or class goals, save that the percentage of students passing at the higher grades should increase. There are no interim goals that are checked once or twice a year although senior leaders have access to AUCITY and students’ Regents transcripts.

There is almost no involvement of the faculty in the identification and setting of the core school improvement goals. Equally, bar the teachers of English language arts, few teachers are aware of a departmental action plan that identifies the strategies to be employed to secure improved motivation and performance for students in the pursuit of raising achievement. School leaders and faculty meet rarely to discuss school goals. Equally, there are few occasions when individual teachers are invited to discuss with senior leaders the progress and performance of the students they teach. No evaluations of the methods of tracking performance or the use of such data are ever explored between senior leaders and faculty. Evaluative tools are rarely used, therefore the school has little idea at any time during the school year whether they are on track to reach any of the goals or how successfully students are making progress. This makes it extremely difficult for the school to adjust its organization to make improvements.

High expectations of dress and behavior are communicated frequently to students and parents with little reference to academic achievement. However, only the most conscientious of student are successful in writing and adopting clear, single, achievable and relevant learning goals for themselves. There are no well-established common procedures for student goal-setting and subsequent evaluation of their goals. Students are therefore not clear about their next learning steps to accelerate their learning in different subjects. Parents have suitable opportunities to attend parent – teacher conference evenings to discuss their child’s progress. The school has sent to all parents an annual month by month calendar for the school year. Bound within the calendar is a very clear and useful parents’ handbook outlining amongst many other things the school rules, expectations and list of events. The school environment is bright with good quality displays and classrooms reflecting the subjects that are taught in them. There are also good quality displays of rubrics, guidance charts, published display materials and students’ work in classrooms.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

This area of the school’s work is underdeveloped.

The core curriculum is aligned to State and New York City requirements. In both the middle and high school there are arts programs and summer schools to provide additional support for some students. In most cases few subjects enrich their curriculum through trips and visits to places in or around New York City to stimulate and excite learning and provide an opportunity to use and apply some of the students’ knowledge and skills. In addition, there are too few after-school programs for the students,

however, for example, the school does provide basketball, soccer, dance, drama and leadership. Students follow Regents courses, especially math, in middle school grades, but often are not entered for the examinations.

Teachers use their own personally devised or departmental assessment systems which vary considerably in quality. Such variation is a barrier to a consistent approach by staff in planning lessons specifically to meet the needs of all students. There are no whole school procedures for recording, tracking and interpreting student performance outcomes, although teachers do keep useful portfolios of students' work which are a strong reference point for use with students and parents. Therefore, differentiation is too frequently a product of chance than design because there is no sustained professional development on how to analyze and use data as a tool to aid differentiated planning and teaching. However, teachers are expected to, and mostly do, work to an agreed methodology such as that provided by the Teachers' College.

School leaders use the budget to provide a core range of experiences for students. In addition the school has spent wisely on specialist science rooms and SMARTboards for most classrooms. Other forms of up-to-date technology have also been purchased and available to staff. However, there has been very little professional development on ways to use and interrogate different technologies. In some areas basic resources are missing and too often students only have one book for their studies. The library is in its infancy as a core school resource and therefore does not support students' independent research or offer teachers additional resources for topics being covered. Further, guidance and advice for students wishing to go to college after graduation is weak.

The Learning Environment Survey reflects a school whose constituent parties are divided. There are large numbers of examples of aspects of the school's work that, for example, parents, teachers and students, are dissatisfied with and the Quality Review also revealed such divisions. However, the conscientious approach of most students shows them to be genuinely interested in their studies and want success. They are, however, anxious over aspects of safety and respect.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped.

Senior leaders do not use the outcomes from classroom observations with data analysis of student outcomes and audit findings of teachers' professional needs to generate a school-wide professional development plan linked to whole school goals and department and individual teacher needs. Where professional development occurs it is most often through teachers choosing or being directed into specific workshops occurring at venues across the City. The school's Inquiry Team for 2008-09 has successfully identified a clear and manageable target population. Their understanding of the research process suggests that the findings are scheduled to be valuable across the school. Subject teachers periodically meet to discuss aspects of their courses and sometimes set up inter-visitations. While new teachers have a teacher mentor, the frequency of involvement and collaboration between both parties is underdeveloped.

While school leaders undertake lesson observations and walkthroughs, there is little evidence to suggest that this is a routine process. Therefore, while the principal makes good evaluative judgments on the quality of lessons, very little is recorded and used with teachers to develop them professionally. There are no procedures to ensure that

teachers, either individually or through grades or departments, rigorously evaluate their own practices to improve student outcomes. The school has adopted a daily advisory and there is a suitable pacing calendar for this program. However, the impact of the program is minimal in relation to student guidance and their work ethic. Too few opportunities are being seized to use youth development, support services and partnerships from beyond the school.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 underdeveloped.

The school's improvement plan is based on three core goals written into the Comprehensive Educational Plan. Whilst these are laudable there is no evidence of any interim checkpoints in place or reference to the value and need for evaluation points through the school year. The plan contains useful action plans with strategies for improvement for each subject area in the pursuit of raising students' performance. However, teachers other than those in the English language arts department have no knowledge of such plans or the strategies underpinning their work. Therefore there have been no discussions with teachers to identify specific development points, agree strategies and identify and work towards specific measurable goals. The lack of communication and ownership of these plans indicates that they are not working documents related to agreed school procedures. There are no formalized interim checkpoints to monitor performance and progress in any subject. Coaches discuss teaching methodologies with individual teachers which is valued when it occurs and influences teaching practice.

While data is widely available to school leaders there is no systematic school-wide approach to its analysis. Therefore there are no formal evaluations of the effectiveness of teaching, departmental work or grade outcomes, especially for middle school grades. Data is not used with any serious effect to identify patterns or trends during the school year, or between years. Consequently no changes to the organizational structure of courses with regard to teaching strategies, resources, and enrichment or intervention services occur. Additionally it is not possible for the senior leaders to devise an effective professional dialogue with teachers based on a routine, rigorous and robust system of school self-evaluation.

The principal has a well defined mission statement for the school. However, while the vision is to improve the school, there are no specific agreed whole school procedures and practice that all staff are working on to bring about any significant movement towards the vision.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Frederick Douglass Academy IV Secondary School	△	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score	X			
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>				
	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?		X		
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?		X		
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?	X			
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?	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 student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>				
	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?	X			
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?	X			
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?	X			
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2	X			

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYQ, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?		X					
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?		X					
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?	X						
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?	X						
Overall score for Quality Statement 3	X						
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?	X						
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?		X					
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?	X						
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?	X						
Overall score for Quality Statement 4	X						
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?	X						
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?	X						
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?	X						
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?	X						
Overall score for Quality Statement 5	X						
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed