

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Progress High School for Professional Careers

High School 474

**850 Grand Street
Brooklyn
NY 11211**

Principal: William C. Jusino

Dates of review: May 7- 8, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Denis Pittman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Progress High School for Professional Careers is a high school with 916 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 33% Black, 64% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% American Indian and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 15.7% English language learners and 9.7 % special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 80%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 72% eligibility.

The Grand Street campus comprises this school and its sister high schools. The campus opened in 1996. The aim was to rejuvenate education at the site and promote community involvement. Central to this ongoing effort is the integral partnership with the Puerto Rican Organization for Growth, Research, Education and Self-Sufficiency Inc., (PROGRESS) a not-for-profit organization that promotes cultural and community identity, harmony and development.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The school is effectively led by an experienced and dedicated principal. His vision for raising the educational aspirations of students is energetically supported and promoted by members of the school faculty. Collaboration and positive relationships are evident features of the school. The sharing of good practice is promoted through a variety of contexts such as Inquiry Teams. Developing open communication and engagement with parents is a specific focus for the school. Parents and students are made aware of the relevant expectations the school has in relation to attendance, behavior and academic performance. Parents value the respect and trust which has been created between students and staff at the school. The school collates the achievement and progress of its students systematically. However, there is variability in the efficiency of the way assessment data is recorded by staff particularly with regard to progress of skills and competencies for students with special educational need. The lack of rigor in some teaching has led to insufficient credit accumulation by some students in the upper grades and a subsequent negative impact on passing rates. The school has been proactive in its efforts to raise graduation rates by making this issue a focus for an Inquiry Team where by “at risk” students receive extensive support.

The curriculum is challenging and provides a breadth of learning experiences for students, particularly in the elective program. However, the monitoring of action plans for specific content areas is not consistent so there is a lack of coherence to the schools work. Students say they are supported well in most of their lessons but are unable to explain their learning goals with sufficient clarity. Extended day programs successfully accommodate students' other interests and learning support requirements. Productive partnerships with support agencies meet the needs of students well. Teachers are generally hard-working and committed to the personal and academic development of their students. However, some instruction is too teacher-directed and does not meet the specific learning needs of individual students. Technological resources are used well to enhance the learning opportunities of students.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The collation of extensive baseline achievement data is efficient and is effectively shared with staff to guide planning and instruction.
- The principal's vision and direction of the school has created a climate where staff collaborate well and share good practice which is promoting improvement in student achievement.
- The school has established effective systems for communicating with parents about the current progress of students which promotes engagement with their child's education.
- Technology is effectively used by an increasing number of teachers to enhance instruction and promote student engagement.
- The school has high expectations for students and has introduced a broad range of elective courses which are relevant to students need and interest.
- The positive, supportive relationship, between students and staff produces an orderly learning environment in the hallways and lessons.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide support for students in identifying their learning goals which reflect skills and competencies and systematically review these with them to identify next steps.
- Ensure greater consistency in monitoring the progress of students with special educational need by relating short-term objectives to specific timeframes and aligning this with instructional practice.
- Ensure instructional strategies and activities provide sufficient variety to address the learning needs of all students.
- Develop consistent monitoring procedures which incorporate focused action planning to address low graduation and passing rates in courses.

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 proficient.

The school has developed systematic and detailed data collection procedures for recording achievement. Subsequent analysis of data for 2008 highlighted unacceptably low graduation rates and insufficient credit accumulation in grades 10 and 11. The school has been proactive in its response in making these issues central to the work of one of the Inquiry Teams. Greater familiarization with computer data bases of student performance is providing improved analysis of differences in gender achievement. However, the monitoring of the progress of students with special educational need is not sufficiently rigorous in relevant classrooms. The compilation of data related to English language learners is more consistent and in consequence, these students are making good progress. The school has effectively identified decoding "word problems" in math as a key factor in contributing to poor performance in testing situations for these students. The issue is being further explored through an Inquiry Team who are focusing on strategies for support for a sample of English language learners in grade 9.

Profiles of student achievement are effectively compiled by most staff. This process is complemented by ongoing periodic assessments which are routinely recorded in a data retrieval system called "snapgrade". This system gives a detailed current overview of student performance in content areas and the identification of next steps in learning. Parents also have access to the system so they are constantly kept abreast of their child's achievements. The portfolio of evidence which is compiled forms the basis of informed discussions with parents at conference meetings. The increasing extensiveness of the information provided to families promotes parental involvement with their child's learning although at present this is not an extensive feature.

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 curriculum units of the core subjects generate a substantial amount of formative and summative data which is regularly used to stipulate learning goals for students. The use of item analysis tests enables a clear identification of individual student needs and also the needs of groups of students. Despite the emphasis which is being given to formulating learning goals, students continue to specify broad generic goals rather than being explicit about academic objectives. The process of identifying and formally recording learning goals for students is not such a strong feature in the performing arts and physical education. Where content areas have Regents data, it is systematically looked at to identify common mistakes in order to address the issue in subsequent

teaching. The school has been proactive in carrying out a series of learning surveys and interest surveys in order to identify how students learn best. In a broader context scholarship data is used regularly to monitor how well the school is doing in meeting credit accumulation objectives and what their next steps might be to plan for. The reflection on and identification of emerging issues for the school are a feature of the collaborative work undertaken by the administration, faculty and parents to produce Comprehensive Educational Plan goals. For example, these include goals such as improving parental involvement, raising attendance levels and improving graduation rates. A common feature of action planning is that insufficient emphasis is given to identifying specific responsibilities, interim checkpoints or detailed timeframes for completion. In consequence there is a lack of coherence and continuity in aspects of the school's work.

A range of communication processes such as newsletters parent-teacher conferences, telephone contacts and e-mails provide a good basis that conveys the school's high expectations about attendance and behavior. The details of periodic assessments (Acuity) which identify specific skills and competencies, related to English language arts and math and snapgrade assessments provide a context for judging achievement and progress. This routine sharing of information has enabled parents to feel part of the educational process. As one parent observed "The regular availability of information helps me to get a better picture of where things are at for my child."

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 proficient.

The curriculum is appropriately aligned to State requirements and is increasingly innovative through its elective program. Students remark that the advanced placement courses are particularly challenging but also interesting. The emphasis on technology and a wider range of lessons promotes effective student engagement in their learning. The school recognizes the need to improve basic literacy skills amongst its lowest achieving students and is focusing on relevant strategies through an Inquiry Team. The specific needs of English language learners are adequately provided through specialized programs and push-in support arrangements. The program for students with special education need has variable outcomes. There is an inconsistency of practice in addressing individual education plan goals within the instructional plans for some classes. In a broader context some instruction is too teacher-dominated which is demotivating for students who are, in consequence, insufficiently engaged in their learning. Conversely, other teachers are adept at using strategies allied to technological resources to plan and deliver lessons that are stimulating and geared to the specific needs of students. The extracurricular dimension of the school is strong particularly in relation to sporting activities.

The budget is used imaginatively and prudently to promote the learning needs of students and staff. The commitment to personalizing a student's experience at the school is reflected in the reduced class sizes. Students are receiving more individual attention. Tracking has improved and this is reflected in greater stability in attendance rates. The school has also made significant budgetary allocations in running Saturday intervention programs which support failing students and review programs for Regents examination such as in Global History.

Open communication is a feature actively promoted through the school's supportive culture that promotes positive interactions between adults and most students. Students and parents refer to the high levels of mutual trust and respect that exists between staff and them. This aspect was endorsed by the positive confirmation expressed at the parents meeting.

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 proficient.

The school has appropriately aligned its professional development to meeting its goals such as accelerating student learning. To that end, a specific focus has been placed on devising strategies to engage students in class activities by improving the efficacy of group work. The specific needs of individual members of staff are routinely built up through a specified program of lesson observations and recommendations for improvement. The school improvement team effectively utilizes a common protocol for conducting lesson observations in order to achieve consistency of practice within classrooms. Staff report that they are ably supported in addressing developmental issues through one-to-one discussions with relevant administrative staff and coaches.

Inquiry Teams provide an appropriate format for staff to be part of a collaborative process in decision making. Currently this has a high impact in the math department because staff are involved in planning and collecting data for two Inquiry Teams. The engagement of staff in professional training is a strong indicator of the collaborative approach the administration has developed in the school. A further facet of its capacity building is through the supportive mentoring program for new staff through pairing with an experienced colleague. Although there are opportunities for inter-visitations and "learning walk-throughs" they are insufficiently structured to maximize reflection about professional practice and how to promote learning in the class room.

In a broader context the commitment to the specific personal and emotional needs of students is reflected in its very effective partnership with a range of support organizations which help students and families. A particularly innovative feature is that the school has made provision for the permanent attendance of a doctor and nurse on site. The highly productive relationship with PROGRESS Inc. has resulted in an influx of funding and projects into the local community which have had positive "spinoffs" for the school. The guidance team plays an effective role in raising student achievement and supporting student's in their personal growth.

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 proficient.

The administration of the school has a regular cycle of meetings to review emergent data to monitor student progress and revise plans and groups in line with these issues. A continuing focus on raising levels of attendance is seen as a critical factor in raising student achievement. Within subjects open discussion and collaboration effectively

creates an environment where strengths and areas for improvement, related to the curriculum and instruction, are routinely identified. The subsequent discussions enable staff to make timely adjustments and improvements to curriculum maps and pacing calendars. However, the lack of robustness in some action planning does not provide an adequate tool for monitoring the progress of development issues in areas such as social studies. The routine monitoring of instruction and the learning outcomes of students in lessons forms a basis for recommendations in relation to professional development or revisions of the curriculum. For example, the outcomes of multi-sensory surveys led to modifications to curriculum planning in subjects such as English language arts and science. The review process, based upon data analysis is exemplified in adjustments which reflect the need for further Regents prep-classes and an evaluation of the impact of extended day classes for off-track students. The strategies of Inquiry Teams with a focus on effective strategies for improving graduation rates and promoting math competences for low achieving students and English language learners are increasingly discussed within the school.

The school is self-reflective and works assiduously to use the data it has generated. The formative assessment and student profiles which have been created enable the administration to routinely monitor the outcomes of specific classes and thereby the effectiveness of individual teachers. It uses this data to identify potential professional development requirements and plan accordingly. The school makes proactive responses to the challenges it faces from and within its local community. This reaction is indicative of the vision and strong personal commitment of the principal to develop and sustain a high quality of education for students.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Progress High School for Professional Careers	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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, DYO, 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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed