

Quality Review Report

2008-2009

George Westinghouse High School

High School 605

**105 Tech Place
Brooklyn
NY 11201**

Principal: Janine L. Kieran

Dates of review: March 9-10, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Isabel DiMola

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

George Westinghouse High School is a high school with 896 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 75% Black, 20% Hispanic, 2% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 68% of the students enrolled and girls account for 32%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 81.6%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

As a Talent Development school, students are programmed into one of three academies. The Success Academy supports first-time ninth grade students. Remaining students are part of either the Information and Technology or Design and Engineering Academy. Over-aged and under-credited first and second year students have the opportunity to graduate in three years within the newly developed achievement academies that exist within the other academy structures.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The school has made good progress since the last Quality Review with a focus on goal setting and use of assessments to measure progress and revise practice. The principal's mantra of "make it personal" has resulted in the development of a culture that embraces individual students and families. This message resonates with faculty, and all members of the school community work hard to get to know students and refine their practice to foster student success. Parents embrace the new principal and acknowledge that her vision has motivated students to believe that "failure is not an option." The school makes tremendous efforts to communicate with parents and students and, as a result, there is a strong sense of partnership between parents and the school.

As a Career Technical Education school, numerous partnerships support student work in technical areas resulting in a rigorous career technical program that fosters real world skills in the areas of information technology, design and engineering. The school has also developed a comprehensive curriculum aligned with State standards and formatted successfully using the *Understanding by Design* model of curriculum development. Partnerships with colleges including New York University Poly Tech, New York City College of Technology and Pace University give students the opportunity to take College Now classes that allow students to earn college credits. Students are also successful in taking advanced placement and other high-level courses.

The administration and teachers use assessment data regularly and effectively to gauge the progress of individual students and most sub-groups of students. This enables the administration to make strategic decisions to develop programming that supports student needs. Teachers plan lessons that differentiate instruction based upon assessment data and are beginning to look at strategies to differentiate for high achieving students. All students set literacy based goals in all subject areas. Progress toward goals is regularly assessed and processes are in place for interim goal revision to support student outcomes, but not to measure progress in achieving whole school goals. Mid-year data indicates an increase in student scholarship, credit accumulation and improved weighted Regents passing rates.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty use a wide range of data consistently and systematically to understand individual student strengths and areas of need.
- Data is used effectively to develop student goals and measurable learning targets across all subject areas.
- All members of the school community have high expectations for students and are collaborative in developing learning targets that address student needs.
- Professional development is valued by all constituencies and is differentiated to meet the needs of individual teachers and supervisors to improve student outcomes.
- Standards-based curriculum is developed collaboratively by teachers and is aligned to student assessment results.
- The principal is respected by all constituencies and articulates a clear vision that is supported by all members of the school community.
- School leaders, in collaboration with faculty and students, use data effectively to structure and modify organizational decisions that have a positive impact on student outcomes.

What the school needs to improve

- Disaggregate data by gender to broaden understanding of student outcomes and address the needs of all groups of students.
- Provide teachers with support in the planning and differentiation of instruction for high achieving students.
- Develop systems to create timeframes to measure school-wide interim goals to measure incremental success.

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 well developed.

Every constituency within the school supports the principal's vision of making their work personal. The entire school community is dedicated to addressing the needs of individual and sub-groups of students through rigorous, school-wide systems of collecting and analyzing data. The school disaggregates data for most sub-groups of students, and the principal acknowledges the need to expand this analysis to include outcomes by gender.

The administration reviews and publicly posts daily attendance data. The attendance committee meets weekly to review targeted student attendance as well as the overall trends of all student groups and of each academy. Guidance counselors, family workers and other support staff contact parents daily when students are absent. As a result, there have been gains in the attendance of some groups of students; however, overall attendance remains an area of concern.

A wide range of data is collected using ARIS, HSST, the ITT tool, ATS and CAP as well as through regular assessments including Acuity, Gates MacGinitie and TerraNova. Results are analyzed by grade, course, academy, student grouping and individual student, resulting in a clear picture of student strengths and areas for improvement. Guidance counselors maintain a longitudinal tracking of student progress toward graduation. At the end of each marking period, students have individual report card conferences with members of the school community. At these conferences, students review their grades and develop a "recovery contract" that sets learning targets and an action plan for all classes where they earn a grade of less than 75, resulting in students having high expectations beyond minimal passing scores.

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.

The principal and administration set high expectations for themselves and for all members of the school community, and every constituency takes its lead from this. School goals are developed through thorough evaluation of data and present a challenge for both students and teachers. The administration provides teachers with assessment and Regents question item analysis. Teachers use this data to revise the curriculum to ensure that it addresses the needs of students. The principal develops the Comprehensive Educational Plan with input from the administrative team and the school leadership team. Data is reviewed and goals are created that align to the greatest areas

of need. For example, Progress Report data indicated that, across content areas, students' weighted Regents passing rates are low compared to both City and peer horizons. The Comprehensive Educational Plan has set goals that address this area of weakness. Although the principal shares the plan with faculty, not all members are truly collaborative partners in the development of the goals or the action plans set forth in the document. The principal has plans to include the faculty at large in the future development of the plan.

All students develop literacy-based learning goals in all subject areas through review of their individual assessment results. Teachers meet throughout the semester with individual students to monitor progress toward achieving goals and collaborate with the students to revise goals when they reach their learning targets. Timeframes for student progress vary and the principal acknowledges that the next step in goal setting is to set specified timeframes for measuring student progress toward reaching goals. Teachers meet regularly in academies to review student data and track student progress across content areas through case conferences. Teachers use the analysis of data during common planning to address the needs of individuals and groups by setting goals across content areas. Regular meetings of teachers allow for constant data analysis and revision of class goals.

The administration and teachers communicate well with students and families regarding course goals and expectations. Parents are invited to meet with teachers during academy common planning time to review their children's learning targets and semester goals. Ninth grade students receive interim progress reports that articulate how students are doing in reaching goals and look at next steps for further progress. The use of interim progress reports is new and is not yet utilized by upper grades. Students across all grade levels and academies sit on a quality steering committee. This committee meets with the administration regularly to address academic and social concerns of students. The administration reviews performance trends with students and collaborates with the students in an effort to improve student outcomes. As a result, parents and students are involved in every aspect of goal setting and in supporting movement toward reaching learning targets.

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 well developed.

A rigorous, standards-based curriculum exists for all subject areas. Social studies and science teachers have developed curriculum using *Understanding by Design* and all other content areas are developing curriculum in this format. Regular weekly meetings allow teachers to align assessment results to curriculum, to design interdisciplinary units and to ensure that daily planning meets the needs of students. Systematic use of formative and summative assessments and thorough analysis of results lead to deliberate daily planning and effective use of grouping to differentiate instruction to support learning goals, resulting in rapid gains in student outcomes. High achieving students take advanced classes that offer students the opportunity to earn college credits. However, strategies for differentiating instruction for advanced students are limited and administrators are developing plans to provide teachers with support in this area.

The administration makes successful strategic organizational decisions to foster student progress. The school utilizes a modified four-by-four scheduling model to maximize the amount of time students have in core subject areas. Expanded time in content area classes has resulted in superior conditions of learning and increased credit accumulation. Academic intervention courses during the school day, after school and on Saturdays are designed using assessment data to give students targeted instruction in areas of need and give students the opportunity to recover lost credits.

The principal holds all members of the community accountable for supporting student progress. As a result, the principal is highly respected and trusted by faculty, parents and students. All stakeholders share a well-articulated vision of furnishing students with the skills necessary to be successful after high school. The principal has set the tone with her message of “make it personal” and, as a result, a culture of strong relationships and trust is consistent throughout the community.

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 well developed.

The school values professional development. The principal and assistant principals each have their own professional development plans that support their professional goals. Their practice is a model for teachers in their own goal-setting process. Each teacher develops professional goals and works collaboratively with the administration to develop a professional development plan that supports the achievement of these goals. Through regular formal and informal classroom observations, administrators and coaches gauge teachers’ progress toward their goals and revise them when necessary. This focus on improving instructional skills has resulted in strong pedagogic practice and engaging, rigorous instruction. A liaison from Johns Hopkins supports the Talent Development model and provides support to new teachers.

Effective programming and solid organizational structures provide teachers with the opportunity to meet regularly within their academies as well as through departmental and grade meetings. Common planning periods allow for student case conferencing, examination of student work, review of data, sharing of best practices and inquiry work. Each academy supports an inquiry team that focuses on a target population of students with similar skill deficiencies. Teachers support each other in developing strategies and use the sharing of best practices and inter-visitations to elevate the conditions of learning for students. Through inquiry work, teachers have been successful in identifying strategies that have been effective in improving student literacy skills and, as a result, there are noticeable gains in student outcomes.

Once a month there is a ninety-minute professional development block that supports teachers’ pedagogic practice in order to align with professional goals and impact student outcomes. Professional development opportunities are collaborative and led primarily by faculty and coaches with support from the administration and Talent Development. The structures that support the development of pedagogical practice have led to an increase in professional communication and continuity in instruction across the school.

The support of every student's social and emotional growth, as well as academic achievement, is a priority for all members of the community. The school has cultivated relationships with several community organizations as well as forging effective partnerships that provide students with support services. Brooklyn Tabernacle provides support to students and families in areas of substance abuse, college and career training and preparation and health issues. Imani House has counselors in the school who support career planning, college readiness and conflict resolution. Counseling in Schools supports over-aged, under-credited students through guidance support. Several partnerships support the CTE programs in the school including HSBC, Optical Tech, 21st Century Optics, and MTA Apprenticeship Program. College partnerships with New York University Poly Tech, New York City College of Technology, Brooklyn College, Long Island University and St. Francis College allow students to take College Now courses, receive college mentors and tutors and provide teachers with professional development for Advanced Placement and technical courses. The school's efforts to engage students with outside organizations have expanded the sense of community throughout 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 proficient.

All school constituencies can clearly articulate the school's vision to ensure that students have the skills they need to be successful in their post-secondary careers. Although actively engaged in monitoring student progress, procedures for setting measurable interim goals for students and timeframes for evaluating success are just beginning.

School leaders review data from academies and content areas weekly to monitor outcomes and adjust classes and curriculum. Results from student and faculty surveys have led to change in how the school addresses students who are having difficulty keeping up with the work. An example of this is the redesign of laboratory make-up opportunities in science courses. Students now have the opportunity to complete missing lab assignments throughout marking periods and, as a result, there is an increase in the number of students on track to qualify to take regents examinations in science in June.

Teachers meet weekly to discuss student progress and the impact of their practice. Using a tuning protocol teachers purposefully review lesson plans, student projects and assignments to determine alignment to student assessment results. Most teachers are actively engaged in curriculum redesign and revision in response to assessment data, although this practice is not yet fully school-wide.

There is a clear message that instruction must align to State standards and the evaluation of student performance should be based on completion of learning targets that result in improved student outcomes. The school has instituted a grading policy that holds teachers accountable for alignment between class grades and standardized exam scores. Administration and faculty collaborate in whole school planning to enrich the curriculum and develop the rigor that challenges students as they move toward making their vision a reality.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: George Westinghouse High 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, 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.

To what extent do ...	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.

To what extent do school leaders...	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.

To what extent do ...	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