



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

The Academy of Collaborative Education

Middle School 344

**222 West 134th Street
New York
NY 10030**

Principal: Rashaunda Y Shaw

Dates of review: February 9 – 10, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Dr Salvador A Fernandez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Academy of Collaborative Education is a middle school with 238 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 75% Black, 23% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 58% of the students enrolled and girls account for 42%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 89%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 86% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped.

The principal in her first year at the school has been able to share a clear vision for the school's development to improve instructional practices, especially in English language arts, that has been communicated to all members of the school community. She has addressed the areas for improvement from the last Quality Review by providing teachers with data binders for them to gather and record formative and summative data. However, teachers do not fully understand how to analyze and interpret summative and formative data in all core subjects to improve student performance and to inform instructional practices. The school is struggling through the beginning stages of working with teachers on how to set goals for each grade, class and individual students. The school does not have the tools in place to develop the teachers' ability to set individual student learning goals that include interim benchmarks and timeframes that strategically track students' progress.

Poor student behavior is a major concern at the school that interrupts classroom instruction. School leaders and faculty are undergoing a school-wide professional development series of workshops using different behavior modification programs to develop a uniform language across the school which will lessen students' outburst in class. The school does not have a set tone of consistency that increases the level of trust and respect among students and staff, so that high expectations for behavior and learning do not yet characterize the school's work and learning environment. During this first year of the principal tenure, teachers have been provided with many fragmented professional development opportunities. However, it is too early to determine if they are consistent or effective. The school provides workshops for teachers as need arises, but does not provide in-depth curriculum workshop for teachers to plan differentiated lesson that will engage and challenge students in rigorous instruction to ensure students meet their learning goals. Hence, the school does not have a differentiated professional development plan that includes a structure for incrementally developing teachers' capacity and providing opportunities for each teacher to set goals to improve their instructional practices in all core subjects.

School-wide improvement plans are general and lack consistency. The long-term goals for English language arts and math pertain to general performance which makes it difficult to establish measurable interim goals with specific timeframes to evaluate the impact of teaching and learning on student achievement. As a result, monitoring remains a major concern for school to track progress towards goals and make adjustments throughout the year.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- In the principal's first year with the school, a clear vision for the school's development has been created and communicated to members of the school community.
- Resources are utilized effectively to align the social development of students with academic improvement school-wide through pupil personnel team meetings that assess students' social and academic needs.
- The school has a system to communicate with families about what is expected of students in English language arts, math, science and social studies.
- The school has strong partnerships with outside organizations to provide support that promotes positive social and academic development of the students.

What the school needs to improve

- Set a tone of consistency, as well as increase the level of trust and respect among staff and students, so that high expectations for behavior and learning characterize the school's work and learning environment.
- Further develop the data gathering system to record, analyze and interpret summative and formative data in all core subjects to understand student performance and progress.
- Expand teachers' ability to set individual student goals that include interim benchmarks and timeframes that will strategically track students' progress in all core subjects.
- Develop a differentiated professional development plan to include a structure that provides an opportunity for individual teachers to set goals to improve their instructional practices in all core subjects.
- Further develop the curriculum to include differentiated lessons in all core subjects as well as interdisciplinary connections to engage and challenge students in rigorous instruction to ensure students meet their learning goals.
- Monitor and revise action plans to include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for improving student outcomes so that the school can track progress towards goals and make adjustments throughout the year.

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 with proficient features.

The school's principal has established a data collection system that enables English language arts and math teachers to record student performance and progress data. Teachers centralize formative and summative assessment in a data binder to compile a profile of their students, but procedures are not consistent among teachers. Standardized tests scores, ARIS, item skills analysis and the gains report are used to inform curricular decisions and group students by skills in English language arts and math. Additionally, in September English language arts teachers administered an informal reading inventory assessment to get an initial baseline score to plan lessons to meet the needs of students. The school has also begun to disaggregate data looking at gender, English language learners and special needs students in order to group by ability and be able to track student progress over time. However, the school does not analyze and interpret formative and summative data collected in depth to ensure that students are making adequate progress in all core subjects.

Parents were invited to attend open school night to inform them of curriculum and what the school's expectations were for their child. The school also sends home progress reports to keep parents informed of their child's progress in English language arts and math, but this practice is not consistent among teachers. The school has begun a major campaign to keep parents informed of their child's attendance which has contributed to a 2% increase from last year.

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.

The Comprehensive Educational Plan was collaboratively developed by school leadership team looking at different data sources to develop the school-wide goals. However, the goals identified by the school are general, for example "to increase student proficiency in literacy by 14% and math by 8%", and do not provide a structure where the school can track progress during the year. School leaders and faculty are struggling with how to set measurable goals for subjects, grades or sub-groups. Although, English language arts and math teachers were provided with assessment binders in order to assist them in setting and monitoring class and individual student goals, there was a lack of consistency and ability among teachers to complete the task. Hence, school leaders have not established a structure to develop teachers' ability to set individual student learning goals that include interim benchmarks and timeframes to track progress and

make adjustments to programs to ensure students are meeting or exceeding their goals in all core subjects.

The principal communicates high expectations with all stake holders about attendance, punctuality, behavior and academics. A hallway bulletin board celebrating students with perfect attendance is clearly displayed next to the main office. The principal instituted an honor roll awards ceremony to recognize student achievement which promotes a positive environment that encourages students to take ownership in learning. Morning memos to teachers keep them informed of what is expected of them to keep track of student progress, behavior and attendance to help maintain an environment conducive to learning. Teachers are also encouraged to send notes to parents keeping them aware of their child's progress both academically and behaviorally. Many teachers at the school conduct home visits to keep parents informed. However, the school does not have a consistent tone set that focuses on high expectations for behavior and learning to characterize the school's work and learning environment.

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 principal has provided a structure where teachers can come together and share ideas and information on how to improve student outcomes. Although the time is provided, it is not effectively used because teachers lack understanding of how to use data to differentiate lessons that will engage and challenge students. The school has a strong extended day program which focuses on targeting skills students' need to improve. Students speak highly of the extended day program, "teachers help us to understand concepts to do better on the test". The curriculum is standards based, but the delivery is not engaging nor challenging. There are too many teacher-directed lessons that provide students' with answers which hampers their understanding and does not challenge their thinking. The school has not developed a curriculum that includes interdisciplinary links which engage, challenge and reinforce students' learning using a differentiated approach to improve students' participation and reduce behavior issues.

The principal made organizational changes to provide additional resources to increase the level of trust and respect among staff and students. An additional dean and social worker were hired to address the behavioral issues at the school. Weekly pupil personnel team meetings are held to go over students concerns and keep parents informed of progress. However, there is still a major behavior problem at the school which prevents learning from occurring in the classrooms. As one students stated, "teachers give up when students misbehave in class". School leaders and faculty had a conference to address this concern. They created a uniformed behavior modification program that is currently being implemented in all classes to improve school environment and address student behavior. The principal has also reached out to the teachers union and department of education officials to assist in changing the culture of school. OPUS dance theatre has been working with students on how to be more respectful at school.

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 with proficient features.

Teachers were provided with a needs assessment using the Santa Cruz teaching standards to develop an individual professional development goal. Teachers meet with school leaders and coaches once a term to go over goals and discuss classroom practices to improve student outcomes. Informal observations are used to incrementally give feedback to further develop teachers' instructional practices and determine the topics for professional development workshops. Teachers meet weekly during common planning to go over units of study with coaches, but the focus is not on planning or modifying lessons to meet the needs of their students. The newly initiated school-wide focus for professional development in the school is behavior modification through many programs. The plan is to establish clear expectations for teachers and students. Teachers are trying to implement procedures to effectively manage behavior outbursts in class, but there is a lack of uniformity among teachers. The school does not have a structure for a differentiated professional development plan that provides individual teachers with an opportunity to set individual goals to improve instructional practices leading to inconsistency in the quality of teaching across the school.

The newly formed inquiry team focuses on the lowest one-third of the students in English language arts in the seventh grade. They found that the students were having difficulty with reading comprehension, specifically determining importance, main idea and inference. The team uses Gathering Organizing Analyzing and Linking program to work with the students after school and this has proven to be quite successful. The team is in the beginning stages of their work, but feels confident they will have a positive impact on student learning.

The school has made it their priority to develop strong partnerships with outside organizations that link curricula with afterschool enrichment to promote students' social and academic development. Students like the afterschool programs because it keeps them engaged in activities that are fun and enriching.

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 with proficient features.

The principal has communicated her clear vision for the school's development to improve instructional practices with all stake holders, especially in English language arts. The school leaders instituted data binders for teachers in English language arts and math to gather record and track student progress. The organizational decision was made to provide common planning time for professional collaborations where teachers look at students work, portfolios and data binders to set next learning steps for students. However, data analysis is in the beginning stages limiting teachers' ability to set accurate goals. Teachers use item skill analysis to adjust curriculum to focus the skill needs of students. The school does not have a structure in place that will enable them to strategically monitor and revise action plans which includes measurable interim goals

and suitable timeframes for improving student outcomes and instructional practices so that the school can track progress towards goals and make adjustments throughout the year.

While the principal has a clear vision of how the school should be, the school's improvement plan is not effective. The school-wide goals are general and lack interim measurable outcomes that can be consistently monitored. Initiatives are implemented but there is no accountability to hold teachers responsible. Teachers are provided with many professional activities specifically targeted to change the culture and climate of the school. Unfortunately, this strategy is not having the desired effect mainly because there is no consistent structure to assess and follow-up whether what is being implemented works.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: The Academy of Collaborative Education	△	➤	✓	+
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