

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**Albert Shanker School for Visual and Performing Arts**

**Intermediate School 126**

**31-51 21 Street  
Queens  
NY 11106**

**Principal: Alexander Angueira**

**Dates of review: April 28-29, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Philip Composto**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Albert Shanker School for Visual and Performing Arts is an intermediate school with 646 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 19% Black, 56% Hispanic, 7% White, and 18% Asian and 0.5% students from other backgrounds. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 89%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 87% eligibility.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is underdeveloped with proficient features.**

Under the leadership of the new principal who was appointed in October 2008 and his able administrative team, the school has established a good foundation to enable all students to achieve academically and socially. School-wide strategic decisions address identified challenges and support a culture of mutual trust and respect. Teachers are highly encouraged by the principal to work collaboratively on decisions that positively influence their work in the classroom.

School leaders and faculty collect a range of relevant information on each student in English language arts and math and effective systems are in place to inform and guide students and their families. The school has yet to develop measurable goals for all students in all core subjects and suitable timeframes and milestones by which to judge progress towards these goals. There is a climate of trust in the school and the administrators' message of high expectations of student behavior, attendance and the school community support academic success. The school has not yet established a database to allow the school community to examine the impact of instruction and track student progress to ensure their achievement goals in all core subjects.

The school does not have in place interim checkpoints and ways to monitor them throughout the year to guarantee student's progress in all core subjects. The good work of the Inquiry Team has been influential in raising teacher understanding and use of data for all students. However, not all lessons are adequately differentiated to meet the needs of each student. This results in some students making fewer gains in their learning. School leaders have not yet sufficiently established structures for teachers to meet regularly to analyze student data and work.

All staff shares the principal's vision and support him to monitor the outcomes for individuals and groups of students. However, the weaknesses in the process of goal setting for students hamper the school's process towards achieving its vision.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school collects and uses a wide range of data to create a picture of the individual students' strengths and areas of need in English language arts and math.
- Leaders have established a strong climate of mutual trust in the school and have communicated their high expectations of student achievement to students, staff and parents successfully.
- School leaders make effective strategic decisions to address identified challenges, and establish a safe and respectful learning environment.
- The principal's trust energizes staff members and their collaborative efforts are beginning to impact positively on student achievement.
- Students, parents and staff respect the principal who has a clear vision for the future development of the school.

### What the school needs to improve

- Enable teachers, administrators, parents and students to analyze the impact of instruction and track student progress towards their achievement goals in all core subjects.
- Develop goals for all core subjects, individuals and groups of students with interim benchmark and specific timeframes, enabling tracking and evaluation of each student's progress.
- Ensure all teachers use data to differentiate instruction effectively to match more precisely the learning needs of all student needs in all subjects.
- Establish systems and procedures for staff to share expertise and examine student work and data rigorously.
- Establish interim checkpoints to monitor and maximize learning outcomes in all core subjects to meet the needs of individual and groups of students.

## 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 collects information and analyzes all available data for English language arts and math to assess learning outcomes for individual and groups of students. Recently, some social studies and science teachers have begun to collect and analyze actionable information to increase students' learning outcomes. The school analyzes the range of achievement data from the Department of Education, including the Learning Environment Survey, the Progress Report and that in Achievement Report Innovative Systems (ARIS) to track and monitor individual student performance in English language arts and math. The school looks closely at the sub-groups of students in special education, Hispanic youngsters and English language learners to analyze their learning outcomes. However, the school's tracking and evaluation of the progress of all students, including subgroups, is not rigorous enough to analyze the impact of instruction and allow school leaders to identify trends in all core subjects.

A comprehensive analysis of student attendance data identified a need to increase staff working and communicating closely with families. School leaders created an attendance plan and, as a result, school attendance has improved. For instance, the school has put in place a computerized telephone system to communicate swiftly with parents about lateness or absenteeism. To increase the open exchange of information about student progress, approximately 40% of the families are on an email distribution list. Although not all parents have access to technology, the school is working towards increasing parents' participation on the use of the school's website. Progress reports are sent home on a quarterly basis to inform parents of students' learning needs and outcomes, as well as attendance data and assessment results. Parents stated they value the frequent information they receive from individual teachers and the school's staff on their child's achievement and performance.

**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 with proficient features.**

The newly appointed principal is driving improvement towards the whole school goals, supported by the assistant principals, staff and parents. School administrators and teachers set grade level goals for English language arts and math based on previous students' performance. The school does not set suitable, differentiated goals for individual or groups of students in all core subjects. As a result, there are not clear plans and benchmarks to accelerate each student's learning across the curriculum.

There is a climate of trust across the school and clearly communicated high expectations of student attendance, behavior and academic achievement to students and families.

Teachers meet with parents and share the academic and personal expectations for their children. Parents are fully informed of Parent Teacher Association meetings, workshops, and other events by telephone, email, the school website or the principal's monthly newsletters. Parents appreciate this support and enjoy the student awards distributed at monthly meetings. All these actions have increased parent attendance and participation in their children's education.

Leaders developed the Comprehensive Educational Plan collaboratively with staff and parents, and aligned goals to the principal's performance review. The goals are specific, measurable, attainable and realistic with suitable timeframes in English language arts and math. All staff receive copies of the goals so as the principal stated, "This way, we are all on the same page." To improve communication of high expectations further, the principal shares the Comprehensive Educational Plan and school goals with all families.

**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 with proficient features.**

Teachers follow curriculum maps that outline the units of study in all core subjects to meet the general needs of students. The principal is determined to move the school forward by making budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions that clearly support school goals and improve progress. For instance, block scheduling allows all students to receive 90 minutes of English language arts and math instruction each day and an Earth Science Regents class has been provided for accelerated 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to raise standards. In addition, the administration looks to ensure that instructional goals are posted in a place where all students can access them, that there is a specific learning objective on the board and that the class is on pace with State standards. School leaders are creating a respectful and safe environment. They have introduced a positive behavioral intervention and support program to prevent problem behavior and the academic failure of students, and to maintain an effective learning environment across the school. As a result, superintendent's suspensions have decreased, indicating that there are fewer serious occurrences in the school. Teachers meet weekly during common preps to review curriculum plans using a range of assessment systems to implement sound instructional strategies in the classroom. They are in the beginning stages of differentiating instruction in English language arts and math, but this practice is not consistent in all core subjects.

The principal has a very high profile around the school that fosters a positive attitude towards teaching and learning. Students stated that they enjoy the newly established after school programs, which include wrestling, soccer, basketball and other activities.

**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.**

School leaders regularly monitor the effectiveness of instruction by walkthroughs, formal and informal observations. This information is discussed at weekly cabinet meetings to establish next steps in professional development. The principal's trust in his staff

energizes them and they work collaboratively to impact positively on student achievement. Teachers enjoy leaders visiting their classes and they receive written feedback on how to improve their instruction, or a "WOW!" thanking them for a doing a wonderful job. Following an electronic survey, a wide range of suitable professional development activities was made available to teachers. These included the use of data such as ARIS and online and teacher created assessments to monitor student progress and create individual student goals. Teachers have also received training to use smart boards to differentiate instruction to meet the diverse learning styles. New teachers are matched with a mentor and receive differentiated support to positively impact classroom instruction.

The Inquiry Team is well established and members are sharing data and best practices to other groups across the school. As a result, teachers are excited to be a part of a collaborative research group to improve their data skills and find out more about student learning. They use diagnostic, formative, summative and attendance data to select one long-term goal and four learning targets for all the targeted population. The learning targets are shared with all teachers each marking period and student outcomes are positively improving. However, formalized structures are not yet in place for teachers to share best practices, analyze student data, and work systematically to improve student outcomes.

The school has a strong partnership with Steinway Child and Family Services that offers valuable counseling and support to families in need. In addition, close collaboration with the Jacob Riis organization is improving the personal and academic growth of each student. The principal and the program director meet regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and to ensure that the program is supporting students and their families.

**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.**

There are ample systems in place to review and monitor frequently a range of data, including formative and summative assessments and attendance, to set measurable goals to enhance student learning. The school's assessment is efficient in English language arts and math, but is not so well organized in all subjects. In addition, interim checkpoints are not in place to monitor learning outcomes for all individual and groups of students in all core subjects throughout the year. Leaders do evaluate thoroughly the effectiveness of the school's work using Department of Education accountability tools designed to accelerate student learning. They meet weekly to analyze data and to select a weekly focus for walkthroughs, which is communicated to teachers through the principal's weekly newsletter. Their daily walkthroughs are used to check teachers' records of individual student goals, and to confirm students are bringing a record of their quarterly goals to class.

The school's self-evaluation is an accurate description of the school's practices from the leadership team's perspective, but does not fully reflect what is happening in the classroom or the impact on learning needs and student outcomes. The well-respected principal has effectively shared his vision to improve the school with the school community. He leads by example. As one teacher stated, "He rolls up his sleeves and works with us."

# School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: Albert Shanker School for Visual &amp; Performing Arts</b>	△	▷	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>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.</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?		<b>X</b>		
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?	<b>X</b>			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>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.</b>				
<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?	<b>X</b>			
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?		<b>X</b>		
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?		<b>X</b>		
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?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		<b>X</b>		

## 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.**

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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>		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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>		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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X		

Quality Review Scoring Key							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed