



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

The Young Women's Leadership School of Queens

Middle-High School 896

**109-20 Union Hall Street
Queens
NY 11433**

Principal: Avionne Gumbs

Dates of review: December 8- 9, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Jeannette Reed

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Young Women's Leadership is a middle-high school with 233 students from grades 7 through 10. The school population comprised of 68% Black, 16% Hispanic and 16% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 1% special education students. Girls account for 100% of the students enrolled in the school. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007-2008 was 96.3%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 57% eligibility.

The school opened in September 2005 and is one of four such schools in New York City. Young Women's Leadership is sharing space with an elementary school. It is scheduled to move into its own building in September, 2010.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient

The principal is passionate about the academic and social growth of each of her students. The principal has high expectations and a clear vision as to how to collaborate with staff to work toward a common vision. Staff members are committed to the school vision. The principal has been successful in developing a professional learning community that includes teachers, students and parents. Teachers feel respected because the sharing of ideas and new "out of the box" initiatives met with support from administration. All teachers have additional assignments and are ready for any challenge they meet. Administration encourages staff members to continuously pursue individual professional goals.

Students state they are safe and secure. The principal and the staff work together to provide constant monitoring. Students appreciate the care and concern of each of their teachers. Students feel an openness to share significant facts in their daily lives. Students are on a first name basis with their teachers and feel respected as individuals.

Parents indicate the school maintains high expectations for their children. The new data systems provide parents with information regarding grades and attendance. Parents use the data system to remain informed about their child's strengths and weaknesses in each core subject. Parent workshops are scheduled on a regular basis. The workshops provide data and help parents to understand their children's strengths and weaknesses. Parents state the principal and staff are always accessible and responsive. Parents are concerned about the lack of a science lab and sharing space in an elementary school setting. They feel their children are in a safe environment.

The quality of instruction is improving. Professional development plans are closely aligned to the goals of the school and teachers meet and collaborate weekly by department. Teachers support each other and classroom inter-visitations are regularly scheduled. Additional focus on the use of data to meet the needs of each student is a work in progress. Administration conducts on-going surveys to track the needs assessment of staff members. A buddy system for assisting new teachers is firmly in place.

Part2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides strong leadership that encourages the school community to work toward high expectations for all students.
- The staff works together in support of each other to share practices and to engage in conversations regarding student progress.
- The school has developed a strong partnership with parents by providing them with data of their progress and learning targets continuously.
- The school has made good progress in tracking student data by providing a tool that gives a picture of student progress to parents, students and teachers.
- The principal empowers staff to participate in professional development activities and to participate in various collaborative teams.
- The school Inquiry Team evaluates and tracks progress of targeted students and the entire school community.

What the school needs to improve

- Evaluate the effectiveness of professional development in improving differentiated instruction and create systems that support ongoing feedback to teachers.
- Ensure the involvement of staff and parents in the formation and monitoring of the School Comprehensive Education Plan.
- Expand the use of measurable goal setting and monitoring of student progress to include all subjects.
- Use data to identify high achieving students and develop rigorous curriculum to expand their learning.

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 achieved much in the area of gathering, analyzing and tracking data. From the outcomes of the data system, teachers are able to track state assessments, interim assessments, test grades and attendance. Information is available to the principal, teachers, students and parents. The school community utilizes data to create a continuous picture of the individual strengths and weaknesses for each student. There is good evidence of goal setting and instruction aimed at meeting learning targets provided by the English language arts, science and math departments. Data of all subgroups provides a clear picture of the achievement of all students and the trends within the groups. The school runs curriculum workshops for parents that enable them to understand the learning needs of their child and provide additional support at home. The school is a welcoming place for teachers, students and parents.

While the school currently provides data systems that identify learning targets and goal setting for students, efforts to address learning targets in all subjects is not evident. Evidence indicates that the use of data is increasing, although it is difficult to measure in all non-core subjects. Currently the school schedule is adjusted to departmentalize core subjects in order to formalize the process of articulating, sharing best practices, noting trends and goal setting on an ongoing basis.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student 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 school is student centered and there is a focus on improving instruction and working collaboratively to help students attain their goals. The school makes use of the children first accountability tools and uses the Acuity item analysis system to determine specific learning targets for math and English language arts. Teachers and administration review plans and evaluate data based on state examinations, teacher assessments and interim assessments. The advisory period serves as the time in which students review their learning goals with their advisory teacher. Students are directly involved in tracking their individual progress through review of individual data binders based on their personalized program. Data binders help students and teachers track individual growth and support goal setting. Targeted assistance to students is based on the "goal sheets", teacher observations and interim assessments. The Inquiry Team meets weekly to review students whose achievement places them in the bottom third of all students, as

well as any student 'off track'. Social studies and science departments use anecdotal evidence and past examinations to measure progress. Students who demonstrate ability are placed in honors classes. The school has yet to include the involvement of parents and staff in the development and monitoring of the Comprehensive Education Plan. The involvement of the school community in the formation of the Comprehensive Education Plan establishes a clear picture of the shared school vision and goals.

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 core curriculum is aligned to state standards. In addition to core curriculum, 9th graders are enrolled in theater and public speaking. Currently, music and art are not offered. Students who need additional support receive tutoring, and students who require accelerated instruction are enrolled in more challenging programs of study. Administration has put in place ongoing data surveys that monitor the effectiveness of programs, curriculum and other key initiatives. Parents, teachers and students take part in the survey. Their responses help monitor the effectiveness of academic programs and offer a forum to make suggestions for improvement.

The school has struggled with differentiation of instruction in all content areas. Teachers have high expectations for students and there is an effort to match instruction with student needs. However, current practices illustrate a need for continuous professional development to ensure consistent data driven instruction to meet the needs of all students. The analysis of data provides good information regarding the performance of students, and the school has made significant strides in developing data systems designed to support targeted instruction. As of yet, an improved understanding of student performance has not translated into consistent individualized instruction.

The principal is an effective leader who has the full support and confidence of the school community. Staff members feel "respected" and state are proud to be a "passionate staff." The administration encourages staff input and it is evidenced by the increase of marking periods from four to six and the addition of honors classes. The changes are a direct result of collaborative team meetings with the principal.

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 engagement of students and staff is clearly moving in the direction of data-driven instruction. Staff members are engaged in goal setting within their respective core subjects. Teachers write and revise goals based on assignments and data systems. The data system has assisted including the general population into the idea of Inquiry and targeted strategies.

A "buddy system" for new teachers is firmly in place. A great deal of visits between staff members is common practice. Lead teachers meet with the principal and as a result develop structures which promote effective methods of developing instructional practices and support. Staff members share knowledge and meet on an informal basis daily. Teachers and departmental chairs develop curriculum maps within each department to ensure alignment to state standards and student needs. The school has focused on professional development and has developed a professional learning community. Staff members are encouraged to participate in professional development activities that support teaching and learning. Each department now has a lead teacher. The team leaders contribute significantly to the strategic development of teaching and learning.

The inquiry team is firmly in place. The inquiry team has expanded to include representation from each department. The team members review student data, instructional strategies, and review student progress in all subjects. The inquiry team makes good use. Effective decisions are made relating to the goal setting and change strategies. The inquiry team is having a positive effect on student progress and achievement. The collaborative Inquiry team is building leadership capacity among teachers, enabling them to be more effective in planning and alignment of curriculum.

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 principal has a clear vision on how to move the school forward toward meeting student goals. Interim assessments and evaluations are used to analyze and modify strategies so that instruction is continuously data driven. Results from assessments are used to track trends and direct instructional changes. Midterms revolve around interim exams, test grades and homework. Teachers monitor and conduct grade meetings to develop the essential trends found in student work.

Formalized departmental meetings assist teachers in developing a specific instructional focus. Collaborative teams develop strategic action plans to address trends and methods to assist with meeting the goals for the individual student.

Planning for change strategies is a work in continuous progress. Departmental teams are in the early stages. The shared vision for achieving targeted goals gives a clear direction toward advancing data driven instruction. The next step is to pull all the data together so that the administration is able to track progress of each student and measure the added value of instruction in relation to student progress.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Young Women's Leadership	△	➤	✓	+
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.							
<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