



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

The Leadership Institute

High School X276

1701 Fulton Avenue

Bronx

NY 10457

Principal: Marta Colon-Jusino

Dates of review: March 4-5, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Doris Unger

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Leadership Institute is a high school with 313 students from grades 9 through 12. The school population comprises 38% Black, 59% Hispanic, and 3% of other or unknown backgrounds. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 75.2%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 93% eligibility.

The school is in its fourth year of operation and since its opening, it has been relocated and now occupies the wing of a building that also accommodates elementary and middle school grades. The principal was appointed in November 2007.

Overall Evaluation

This school is undeveloped with proficient features.

The school has implemented organizational and programmatic changes aimed at improving student outcomes. A new bell schedule has been adapted this spring term that carves out time to allow for common planning among teachers, professional development and opportunities for the one-on-one coaching of new teachers. The teaching staff work hard for their students and again have communicated their desire for the administrative team, and specifically the principal, to be more visible and provide feedback regarding their classroom practices,

The students are respectful of the staff, their building and each other; the tone of the building has dramatically improved since last year as voiced by both students and staff members. Students feel safe in the building. The principal has an "open door" policy with regard to meeting with students, parents and caregivers. Teachers "always make themselves available" is a common opinion among students.

Low attendance and selective cutting remains an issue. An additional guidance counselor has been hired and both counselors work closely with the administration to design and implement strategies for attendance improvement. It is too early see the effects of their efforts. Classroom lateness procedures are not uniformly enforced.

The use of data to inform lesson planning with an emphasis on differentiation of instruction is not uniformly practiced. There is a lack of data analysis necessary to tackle all areas of need and to formulate short- as well as long-term goals to help remedy deficiencies. Whole school improvement strategies and the timeliness for their implementation and changes are lagging. The work of the inquiry team demonstrate progress in the in-depth analysis of the performance of subgroups of students however, this is in its early stages making an interim evaluation difficult.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a vision and plan for the future development of the school.
- The administration has recently established systems and provided resources that effectively connect with students and their families to enhance personal and academic growth.
- The principal provides a structure that encourages consistent and active teacher participation in the inquiry process.
- The faculties and departments work together in an environment of mutual trust, teamwork, respect and positive attitudes towards teaching and learning.
- The school provides students and parents with regular feedback via progress reports and telephone outreach

What the school needs to improve

- Systematically use data to identify student's strengths and areas of need.
- Further disaggregate and analyze data in order to identify and monitor trends and patterns among the schools subgroup populations.
- Use data informed processes to set measurable goals for all students in all subject areas
- Use data to organize curriculum and plan lessons that address the individual needs of students
- Create interim benchmarks that result in needs based instruction to maximize student outcomes and allow the accurate measurement of progress for all school goals.

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 administration generates reports and compiles data that is shared with all staff members during professional development sessions and full faculty meetings. Easy to read graphs and charts are prepared that highlight successes and areas that need further attention. Training in the use of data management through ARIS has been undertaken. The principal has conducted one-to-one sessions with every teacher to support their understanding of handling data especially to better identify specific aspects of student needs. However, detailed analysis of data is limited to the principal and a core team of individuals in the school and even this process is in its beginning stages. A lack of technology is a challenge as it limits direct access of student information by teachers. Other data retained in binders is kept in a central location for review.

The school uses Acuity to identify and diagnose weaknesses in past Regents results in order to plan to close achievement gaps in English language arts and math. The staff understands that there are subgroups in the school with specific deficiencies and the school maintains a database for all special education students and has trained teams on accessing individual education plans. However, they have only recently begun to use data to identify performance trends and variations for some other subgroups. There remains a lack in the granular analysis necessary to tackle all areas of need and to formulate short- as well as long-term goals to remedy deficiencies.

Positively, the administration has recently begun to lead the work into analysis of students' performance in the lower third through its inquiry team that has selected a focus on the comprehension of non-fiction texts. The team is beginning to implement instructional strategies and have the opportunity to engage in an open exchange of information due to the new bell schedule that allows common planning time. Teachers have begun to include conferencing in their classroom practices and the tracking of that information is beginning to take shape.

Attendance information is collected and is shared with students and their families via telephone outreach with follow up appointments with the students and/or parents. The administration has just implemented a system of generating cut reports to address and target students who are poor attendees. Guidance staff serves as the core team for that initiative but the school lacks a tool that will allow for immediate access to this attendance information. The administration has begun to look at trends and patterns from data as it relates to attendance with some success in students re-entering school.

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.

Although data is available, collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable learning goals are limited. The school lacks a systemic and uniform practice in the formal use of data, in recording and tracking long-term and interim student goals to maximize student progress and outcomes. Although training has begun to help teachers look at how data can better inform planning for differentiated instruction this is still seen by the school as work in progress. Awareness of strengths and areas requiring improvement are not specifically shared with students. This impedes them in being involved themselves in setting targets for the acquisition of personal skills and knowledge as well as being able to effectively measure improvements in their own performances.

Opportunities for parent/teacher conferences are made whereby students’ progress may be assessed after each report card period. Students and families feel that the school communicates high expectations and involve students in identifying broad goals particularly where it pertains to leadership qualities and future college expectations. This is evidenced by the interest shown by many parents attending college information night and financial aid workshops. Currently, the guidance staff leads this work but the administration is planning to expand this to include classroom teachers.

The administrative team works closely with the school leadership team and their support organization in reviewing and analyzing data to identify overall aspects of school development. Together they have reviewed the Comprehensive Educational Plan to incorporate programs aimed at; improving student achievement, increase parent involvement, provide opportunities for community service, college awareness initiatives and opportunities for credit recovery. The school has also analyzed past progress reports and learning environment surveys to inform them and to help in the creation and development of the current document.

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.

Classrooms lack evidence of a common expectation across subject areas within grade levels. Rubrics are not used across subject areas to establish a uniform standard from which to measure achievements. Classrooms libraries exist but are not leveled which makes it difficult for students to know how to select the appropriate reading material to match their correct level of ability.

Lessons are often conducted to include a mini-lesson followed by small group activities but students do not know why or from what criteria they are grouped. Students cannot articulate their own learning goals for the semester and are not aware of their specific academic strengths and weaknesses. In some lessons students are asked to complete the same task within groups but with no variation in materials distributed that might allow all students to participate fully in the learning.

The school broadly organizes students who need additional support by placements in classes that provide additional scaffolding and students who need additional challenge are placed in more rigorous classroom environments. Some teachers provide extra support using lunch and after-school time to provide tutoring for students and others assist students on their Regents exams and provide exam review during Saturday Regents Academy. However, there is little differentiation in individual teacher's planning that sufficiently considers each student's areas of need. In lessons seen there were no opportunities for student who are capable of excelling to do additional or more challenging work.

The staff respects and trusts the principal and is happy to communicate concerns and needs with her. Teachers together, foster a sense of mutual trust and respect that has enabled them to share their instructional practice through informal classroom walkthroughs and peer inter-visitations. Despite this positive non-structured approach to raising the quality of instruction, administration is insufficiently visible in the school. Teachers express the desire for them to take a more active role in providing direct and specific feedback about their classroom practices. Teachers admitted that they are not versed as to how they could level their existing classroom libraries and share a common concern about requiring further help with differentiation in their classrooms. Less experienced new teachers express a need for differentiated professional development and for them to engage in this process in a more individualized manner. In response, the principal has allocated resources to provide additional teacher mentors for this work but it is too early to assess the extent of its success.

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.

Professional learning communities are emerging. Very recently, the principal has implemented a change in programming that has a built-in daily common prep period for teachers as well as a regular half-day that allows for grade team and subject team meetings, inquiry team and small group professional development sessions and full faculty meetings. Teachers are working collaboratively, sharing information and best practices, and new teachers and teachers identified as in need of supervisory support have been recently assigned supervisors to work with them on a one-to-one basis. Those who currently have mentors assigned to them find them extremely helpful.

Since the implementation of the new bell schedule, the assistant principal has been scheduled to work closely with individual teachers as well as their departments. This organizational change has provided a structure for and an opportunity to begin the work of creating a coherent instructional approach. The school is in its beginning stages of working within these teams to increase their knowledge base of differentiation. After some initial professional development, teachers have implemented instructional strategies including hands-on experiences in science and math and simulations and performance to build students' understanding of world cultures and to raise interest in literature.

Teachers do not use data independently nor consistently enough to guide their lesson planning and monitor student progress in specific and measurable ways. Comparisons across classrooms are not routine and specific actions from the review of data have not yet emerged. However, the assistant principal is working with departments to develop rubrics to ensure State Standards are met, and clearly define expectations for quality of student work within each subject and grade level. Because teachers share classrooms, peer observation is unavoidable therefore an organic part of the school culture.

Guidance staff which include bilingual counselors work diligently to discuss individual goals and discuss progress towards graduation. They meet with students regularly and monitor student progress with a specific focus on credit accumulation and Regents preparation. Parents are invited to participate in this process. The founding school's partner continues to provide academic intervention services through after-school programs and social emotional support to students by funding a social worker.

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.

Although the administration uses data to evaluate effectiveness, guide organizational decisions, and guide teacher improvement strategies, the timelines for their implementation or any changes are lagging. From the various meetings the principal has responded to concerns and budgeted additional resources to help address the needs that teachers have with regard to improving their own instructional practices. As a whole it has not established the means and expectation for teachers to incorporate within their instructional practices, interim goals attached to appropriate time frames, differentiating instruction with a focus on evaluating and re-evaluating, and creating and revising student learning plans throughout the year. As a way of addressing these shortfalls the administration has set aside time for meetings where teachers have the opportunity to be active participants in creating systems across grade-levels and subject areas to improve student outcomes in measurable ways. Additional mentors are scheduled to work with teachers to assist them with analyzing data and to create interim and long-term goals for themselves as well as their students but this is still work in progress.

The principal has articulated a vision of the future development of the school and invites teachers to participate in creating the structures in which that work can happen. The school is increasing its approach to looking at data and teachers are focusing on student progress but at this time, this work is sporadic; is not school-wide, nor is it routine. The school does not have consistent and systemic structures in place for monitoring and evaluating each student's progress throughout the year. This adversely affects its ability to make prompt and effective adjustments to programs and instruction.

The tone of the school is purposeful and teachers feel that they can now be more focused on teaching and learning as opposed to handling disciplinary issues. Such improvements are building capacity that is now being redirected to address the improvement of instruction and building leadership and capacity among the staff.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: The Leadership Institute High School	Δ	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score		X		
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?		X		
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?		X		
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			X	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X		
Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?		X		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			X	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?		X		
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X		

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYO, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
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