

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Monroe Academy for Visual Arts and Design

**High School 692
132 Boynton Avenue
Bronx
NY 10472**

Principal: Richard J. Massell

Dates of review: November 24 – 25, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Sue Alton

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Monroe Academy for Visual Arts and Design is a high school with 522 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 23% Black, 76% Hispanic and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 76%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 86% eligibility.

The school shares the campus with four other schools.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped.

The principal uses computerized systems effectively to decide class groupings within the grade and to identify trends for individual students. In most subjects, data is the basis of the information provided to parents about their child's achievements. However, teachers do not use data consistently to identify the precise progress of individual students, subgroups, classes and grades within subjects. This is an area for improvement from the last Quality Review. Nor do teachers use data consistently to differentiate instruction to ensure all students are appropriately challenged, based on their previous learning. Most students show some commitment to learning and achieving their end of year goals, through the school's focus on the importance of passing the grade. The principal ensures students and families are informed about the school's expectations for attendance, behavior and achievement. He knows all students very well and students respect him, which results in most students making efforts to respond to his requests to attend regularly and persevere with their learning.

Little progress has been made since the last Quality Review and all of the areas for improvement are reflected in those outlined in this review. Whole school goals are not clearly identified or shared by the whole community, other than that each student should pass at the end of each year. Plans do not include interim goals with benchmarks for review and evaluation. Professional development processes are not rigorous and do not provide a range of opportunities and support, based on school goals and individual teacher needs identified in their professional development plan. The impact of professional development on differentiated instruction is not followed through consistently. Technology is used in most classes to support learning and students enjoy these opportunities, although opportunities for arts courses are still very limited.

The principal takes responsibility for strategic whole school planning and school self-evaluation. Opportunities for the whole school community to be involved in this process are very limited because of a lack of systems and processes for distributing leadership and delegating responsibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal collects and uses a range of data to inform organizational decisions about groupings of students, and to identify trends for individual students.
- The school uses data appropriately to inform parents and students about achievement in most subject areas.
- The principal ensures students and families are informed about the school's expectations for attendance, behavior and achievement.
- Most students who attend show some commitment to learning and achieving their end of year goals

What the school needs to improve

- Establish a strategic, whole-school planning process, involving the school community in analyzing data and goal setting to develop a new, focused Comprehensive Educational Plan.
- Establish a consistent and formalized process for school self-evaluation and review to inform all plans and the setting of goals, involving a range of personnel.
- Establish consistent systems across the school to identify measurable long-term and interim goals for all plans with benchmarks for review and evaluation.
- Establish a consistent understanding and expectation of differentiated instruction, based on previous learning, to ensure all students are appropriately challenged in lessons and meet their learning goals.
- Establish a strategic approach to professional development, based on school goals and individual teachers' professional development plans, with rigorous systems to monitor and evaluate the impact on instruction.
- Consider processes to involve a range of staff in decision-making and whole-school planning through a more strategic approach to delegation and distributed leadership.

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.

Data use is unsophisticated and mainly linked to credit accumulation. A few staff use data as a tool to identify the strengths and weaknesses of students, groups of students or subject areas and to plan, but this is inconsistent. Some teachers are beginning to use computerized systems to manage data and to analyze test responses, enabling them to identify areas to re-teach more quickly. The principal maintains a data base to track the number of credits accumulated by each student towards end of year tests. This information is used to identify class groups and is provided to teachers to support their own assessments and to identify those students who are not achieving the necessary credit accumulations to be targeted for additional classes. However, the data which is collected is minimal and not sufficiently detailed to facilitate an in-depth analysis of student achievement and progress.

The school does not consistently analyze trends or the strengths and areas of need for students other than credit accumulation. The individual progress of special education students and English language learners is tracked as for all other students, but there is no overall analysis of the achievement of this group of students. Although the school is aware of some trends in achievement in mathematics and in the achievement of boys, data is not used strategically to analyze possible causes for this, or to identify teaching programs or to target intervention and support, for these specific issues.

Tools to enable parents and students to evaluate and track progress are basic, but include mailing letters home and providing parents with reports. There are opportunities for parents to meet with teachers each semester to discuss their child's progress towards end of year goals. More creative approaches to working with parents and involving them in their child's learning are not in place. This means that opportunities for parents to become involved in their child's learning are minimal.

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.

School leaders and faculty set long-term goals in a range of subjects for individual students and grades with the expectation that 100% of students will pass the grade at the end of the year. This expectation is unrealistic based on the varying abilities and needs of the students, and does not take into account students' prior learning. Although progress towards end of year goals is tracked in terms of credit accumulation and assignments completed, no interim goals or benchmarks are set for individual students and groups. As a result, individual and group needs and goals are not used to plan differentiated instruction. This means that in most lessons, the activities and

expectations for all students are the same, and the needs of individual and groups of students are not addressed.

School improvement planning is not a whole-school strategic process. The current plan is four years old. It contains measurable long term goals, but these are the same for each grade. There are no processes to evaluate this plan against interim milestones and goals to inform new school goals and a new plan.

The school identifies a need to involve more parents in their child's learning, but there is no strategic plan to improve this situation, and few parents are involved in the work of the school. However, the principal ensures students and families are informed about the school's expectations for attendance, behavior and achievement and some teachers email their students and families. Despite this, attendance remains very low. Good achievement is praised through certificates displayed around the school and bulletins on video screens. Students say this motivates them, and achievement in the end of year tests improves each year. However, opportunities to involve students more actively in their own self assessment are limited, and most students do not have clear plans of how they can achieve their 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 underdeveloped with proficient features.

The curriculum is designed to meet the general needs of students and is enriched by a good range of technology. Visits support the curriculum effectively, for example a visit to see "Billy Elliott" as part of the drama program. Although the school is a school for "visual art and design", students comment on the limited opportunities to learn in these areas. The potential to use art and design to motivate students and support learning in other curriculum areas is not developed.

Teachers mark student assignments and record grades systematically. The use of rubrics and conferencing opportunities are limited, as are opportunities for students to be actively engaged in evaluating their own learning and discussing what they need to do to improve. Although data is used to identify class groups, differentiation within classes is minimal. Teacher assessments do not inform differentiated instruction, and in most lessons expectations and activities are the same for all students. Most lessons are teacher directed, requiring students to answer questions, copy notes or complete worksheets. However, although students are passive in lessons, most show some interest in their learning and want to succeed. Opportunities to debate and discuss are minimal. In a few lessons, students are unfocused and off task, often because activities lack challenge, are not focused on student need or prior learning and the pace is slow. Most teachers and students speak positively about the principal. One student said, "He's a good guy. He knows us all so well." Relationships in the school are mostly positive and student behavior in most lessons is satisfactory. Where it is not, this is directly linked to slow pace and low expectations set by teachers. As students move around the building, they are noisy and it is at these times that issues occasionally occur. The dean and the principal take the main lead in supporting students to improve their behavior, but expectations are not consistent across the staff, which results in these variations in student conduct.

The budget is not linked strategically to the whole school plan to support the achievement of learning goals. Teachers and students value the commitment made to them by the principal when taking budgetary decisions. The installation of air conditioning and technology equipment are two examples. Students enjoy opportunities to use this good range of technology and say it makes lessons more interesting.

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.

Professional development is led by the principal. Opportunities for teachers to take part in a range of opportunities and activities to support their development other than these sessions are limited. This means that teachers have few opportunities to improve their skills. However, very recently, the "critical friend" process was introduced. Teachers volunteer to meet and share issues and concerns and provide support for each other. Although it is too early to see the impact of this program, increased opportunities to meet and discuss pedagogy support teamwork effectively.

The observation of instruction is not a strategic, carefully evaluated process involving teachers and administration. There is no school wide professional development plan, nor do teachers have their own individual plans. Feedback to teachers following observations is not immediate or consistent. Therefore, opportunities for this process to improve instruction or target school goals are limited.

The inquiry team project finished last term and the work is still to be evaluated. No structure for the team to work together this year is in place and no focus identified. Although the team speaks informally about the possible outcomes of their work, due to lack of planning, the opportunity to have any impact on school systems and processes this year is seriously reduced.

The school works with some organizations to support students, for example the Mission Society offers a range of opportunities outside school. However, there is no strategic evaluation of the impact of these partnerships and whether the students who need to attend do so. Guidance counselors and parent co-coordinators support targeted students, but there is no formal evaluation of the impact on student achievement in order to revise plans and adjust goals. The principal is always available to students and they respect and trust him and often turn to him for help, which is always given.

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.

The principal examines data frequently to track the progress of individual students towards end of year goals, through their credit accumulation. This information is used to identify class groups and to make adjustments to these through the year. Teachers use data to track credit accumulation and grades in assignments. However, this information is not used to analyze strengths, weaknesses and trends, or to set objectively measurable long-term and interim goals, other than success in examinations. As a result, teachers do not use data consistently to plan instruction for groups and

individuals. This results in low expectations and slow pace and progress in some lessons.

There are no structures for formal self-evaluation and review. This means that whole school planning is not based on a secure knowledge of school and student current needs. The school self-evaluation form is very brief and not evaluative. It does not focus sufficiently on the impact of actions. Organizational decisions, for example the work of the inquiry team and professional development, are not strategically evaluated using outcome data. This means they have little impact on instruction or student achievement. The strategic plan is four years old and no evaluation or adjustments have taken place. It contains long-term goals that are the same for each year group. Timescales, interim goals, evaluation processes and roles and responsibilities do not feature in the plan. As a result, there is no strategic overview and there is a lack of a coherent vision for the school, by the whole school community. This means that some staff do not take ownership of whole strategies, because the principal does not involve the staff in decision-making and whole school planning. He does not delegate tasks or distribute leadership roles and responsibilities. Opportunities to develop staff skills and involve them in creative planning and leadership through their areas of expertise are limited.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Monroe Academy for Visual Arts and Design	△	➤	✓	+
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.

To what extent do ...	△	➤	✓	+
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?		X		
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?	X			
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?		X		
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent do school leaders...	△	➤	✓	+
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?	X			
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?	X			
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?	X			
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?	X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 4	X			

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

To what extent do ...	△	➤	✓	+
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