

# Quality Review Report 2009-2010

**PROGRESS High School for Professional Careers**

**High School 474**

**850 Grand Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11211**

**Principal: William Jusino**

**Dates of review: March 16-17, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Nancy Gannon**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

PROGRESS High School for Professional Careers is a high school with 958 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 31% Black, 66% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 80.7%.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

PROGRESS High School for Professional Careers was founded fourteen years ago by a group of educators and partners who are passionate about providing students with a culturally rich and rigorous education. The school is organized in strong departments, and each department leader has worked to improve instruction according to school and departmental goals. Teaching practices consistently reflect this work. Teachers effectively differentiate in a variety of ways, including product and process, to meet the needs of a diverse student body. Departments have developed effective common assessments, and therefore are more adept at tracking student progress. They use those results to support struggling teachers by identifying successful strategies within the same department. However, the school has not yet aligned resources to create teams of teachers who all teach the same cohort of students. Therefore, although teachers meet regularly in teams, they are not able to focus on a specific group of shared students. Students are not always well known by their teachers, but they receive support from strong partnerships with outside organizations that provide mentoring, scholarships, after school activities and other resources that augment the school's offerings.

School leaders meet regularly to analyze the school's curriculum and teaching practice, and to make changes that support better progress of students. They develop strong goals through a careful analysis of data, although those goals are mostly within departments. Within departments, leaders strategically use the observation process to help teachers move forward in their own learning about good instruction, and this work is reflected in observation reports and in student outcomes. Although departments have done significant work in developing coherent curriculum and assessments within their subject, the school has not developed a plan to align standards across departments to create a set of key school-wide standards. Therefore, sometimes the energy of each departmental inquiry team does not push toward the same overall outcomes for students. Similarly, because departments work somewhat independently, some departments have found very effective ways to set goals and measure progress toward those goals, but those systems have not yet been embedded school-wide. Although some departments have found effective ways to aggregate and analyze data, those systems have not yet been adopted across the school, and so not all departments are as effective in their monitoring of student progress and achievement.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Effective teaching practices throughout the school support and engage a wide array of learners.
  - Teachers use a variety of methods of differentiation. For example, a bilingual Algebra class grouped students in trios based on math assessment and on language skills. The trios received algebraic word problems, but the level of difficulty varied based on a recent assessment. A science teacher differentiated the difficulty of equations but let pairs of students pick their own level, depending on the challenge they wanted. An English teacher grouped students based on assessment results and then let groups choose projects that were more and less difficult. In every opportunity with choice, a large percentage of students opted for the more challenging work. By using strategies that support students on different levels, teachers are able to help students reach their next learning steps.
  - Many teachers moved students beyond compliance to active engagement in their work. In an advanced placement Biology class, for example, students were in deep discussion about their earthworm dissection and could articulate why they needed to know the details of a worm's innards. By helping students see a connection between the work and their lives, engagement deepens and pushes students to deeper learning.
- The dedicated school leaders meet regularly within departments to carefully analyze instructional and curricular results, and have made changes that lead to improved student outcomes.
  - Because of low pass rates on last year's Regents, the Social Studies department meets weekly, and in smaller groups multiple times per week, to re-structure curriculum and instructional practices to give a greater emphasis on essay development, breaking the process into small steps for students. After changes have been made, the department gives another assessment and looks together at student work to determine next steps. By constantly monitoring outcomes, the department has seen progress in student writing outcomes.
  - The math assistant principal aggregates results of regular assessments to see how each teacher's class performed overall and on each type of question. Teachers then share successful strategies or receive support based on the data. By monitoring and revising curriculum and instruction based on student success, this department sees better student outcomes.
- The strong partnership with PROGRESS (Puerto Rican Organization for Growth, Research, and Self-Sufficiency) and other organizations supports students effectively in their social, emotional, and academic growth.
  - The fourteen-year relationship with PROGRESS facilitates funding opportunities for scholarships, science laboratories, computer labs, athletic fields, and a variety of other supports that support leadership development and academic opportunities for students. The school also

partners with Big Brother, Big Sister, Build On, and Leadership, all of whom provide opportunities for students to travel, be mentored, and participate in clubs and extra-curricular opportunities. Students consistently cite these activities as motivating and helpful to their growth.

- The school hires for and supports teachers' skills in engaging with students in positive ways. Students note that even when students misbehave, teachers respond with support rather than anger. Establishing a faculty that is student-centered has created a positive culture that encourages learning.
- School goals spring from an analysis of data and impact classroom practice, leading to improved student outcomes.
  - Although the school is organized departmentally, the overarching goal to differentiate instruction by using data is evident in most classrooms. In addition to acting on this school-wide goal, teachers talk fluently about departmental goals and can show evidence of their progress. For example, English language arts teachers implemented common rubrics and students on different grades can explain how these rubrics are important in helping them know their next steps.
- The school effectively uses observations and other teacher data to improve teacher practice and student outcomes.
  - Each department leader works to support teachers in a variety of ways to move them to their next level. Beyond the mentoring that they give to new teachers, they provide one-on-one support, arrange intervisitations, and look at student work as a group to help all teachers learn. Because school leaders plan carefully around teacher learning opportunities, differentiation has increased and students' learning needs are addressed at every level.
  - The math department is exceptional in the way it organizes data to analyze teacher performance. Because teachers give common assessments, the assistant principal can compare results across teachers and can document and target exemplary practices and teachers who need support. Because teachers get concrete feedback connected to student performance results, they are better able to share best practices and hone their craft to support student progress.
- Teachers use common assessment and common tools to aggregate data around outcomes, leading to better decision-making and academic results.
  - Teachers across the school input their grades to an online system and are able to use that information to track trends in their classroom, and to alter their curriculum based on results of their class progress. This practice helps teachers refine their teaching to support student learning.
  - Within departments, teachers aggregate data from periodic and other common assessments to better understand student progress across the department. They track trends and then use item analysis strategies to understand better the underlying reason for those trends. By using these strategies, the social studies department has identified specific skills on which they focus their teaching, and they have seen good student progress because of this work.

## What the school needs to improve

- Align resources, including teacher time and class size, to more effectively support school-wide goals and accelerate student learning.
  - Currently teachers have time to meet in departmental teams. However, the school is not organized so that one group of interdepartmental teachers works with the same group of students. Therefore, one teacher team cannot be accountable for the success of a group of students over the year.
  - The school has reorganized resources effectively to address most of their instructional goals. However, they have not organized them to address the sense of disconnect that some students have articulated. As a result, teachers continue to have large student loads, students articulate that they do not always feel well-known, and attendance at the school is below average.
- Focus teachers on a set of key school-wide standards so that data analysis leads to shared, targeted strategies around improving student learning.
  - Teams and individual teachers regularly gather and analyze schoolwide and classroom data, both summative and formative, but currently, they do not align that data to a set of key standards. Therefore, departmental teams focus on different issues and different strategies and the collective work and energy does not move the school forward in one clear direction.
- Use already established quantifiable goals as a model to create time-bound benchmarks for all school-wide goals so that the school can better measure progress toward improved outcomes.
  - Currently, teachers are not setting specific goals with benchmarks to measure the progress of subgroups within classes. As a result, they have a good understanding of overall progress but do not know how the relevant subgroups are doing.
  - The school leadership sets clear, data-informed goals for schoolwide progress, and some of those goals have benchmarks along the way. However, at this time, the practice is not consistent, and so the school cannot measure progress toward every school goal.
- Build on departmental structures to examine the school's system of collecting and evaluating data in order to better target successful practices and accelerate student learning.
  - Currently, some departments have developed very strong systems for assessment and aggregation of student outcomes, while others are more rudimentary. Because the school has not analyzed these different strategies, they have not created a uniform system that all departments use to track student progress consistently in every subject.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

<b>School name: Progress High School for Professional Careers</b>	△	▶	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?		<b>X</b>		
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?		X					
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		X					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X					
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>