

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Frances Perkins Academy

**High School 632
50 Bedford Street
Brooklyn
NY 11222**

Principal: Javier Guzman

Dates of review: November 16 – 17, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Ronald Feinstein

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Frances Perkins Academy is a high school with 115 students from grade 9 through grade 10. The school population comprises 55% Black, 41% Hispanic, and 4% White students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 76% of the students enrolled and girls account for 24%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 84.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The school is in its second year. The principal, assistant principal and staff work vigorously to actualize the principal's vision for the school with the best interests of students in mind, and work tirelessly to build relationships with students and their families. Teachers, advocate counselors and the coordinator of internships collaborate to personalize learning for students. The unique school design and schedule ensures that advisor-teachers work consistently with a small group of students and collaboratively develop individual learning plans. Teachers regularly visit internship mentors ensuring that student needs are met. Mentors are equally enthusiastic about their roles. Five teacher teams regularly review student transcripts, individualized school-generated progress reports, narratives, student work samples and student exhibition data. These effective systems ensure immediate actions to keep students on track. At present however, the school does not use predictive data well, especially for incoming ninth graders, so that they are unable to pre-empt the need for intervention classes. As a result, valuable learning time is wasted before students' individual needs are fully addressed.

On the two days each week that students participate in internships, the entire staff is engaged in collaborative planning and developing an inquiry approach to learning. However, at present, learning plans and internships are currently too broadly aligned to State standards, leaving students without a focus on the essential elements of study. The school conducts a gap analysis to ensure students are on track to graduate. Students and parents respectfully questioned if the curriculum provides all the courses that students need to graduate. The recent expansion of three online resources makes achievement data available to parents. Students said that they are accountable because teachers know them very well. "Every Monday, I have a ten-minute check-in and I get an email from my teachers if I am missing something." An individual school progress report is available for math, science and art grade books and behavior logs; and an additional website allows access to math and science class work and homework. Although quarterly progress reports and narratives offer broad recommendations, they do not include specific next learning steps, thus projects and plans lack rigor and students are not always clear about how precisely they can improve. Parents are not fully familiar with these systems and explained that they are more comfortable with traditional mail or memos from the school.

The structure and organization of this school relies heavily on curriculum design skills, placing heavy demands on teachers both new to the field as well as to this school. Teachers have a range of experience in this sphere but the school has not yet aligned professional development activities to meet individual needs and requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school provides very effective support for each individual student which impacts positively on their academic success and social emotional well-being, both from within and outside the school.
 - The school's unique advisor-teacher structure is carefully designed to ensure that each student is known well by at least one adult who, alongside a team of advocate counselors, coordinates child/youth development supports. Advisor-teachers work with no more than 30 students to develop individual learning plans and closely partner with content teachers, meeting twice weekly, to monitor and discuss these plans.
 - Advocate counselors and the Coordinator of Learning through Internships support personalization and ensure that internships challenge and engage students.
- School leaders and faculty have effectively adapted data management tools in order to highlight performance relating to individuals and specific groups unique to the school, and to make school-level decisions.
 - A range of appropriate online resources has been effectively adapted to aggregate, organize, and make data available to teachers, students, and parents. Richer-Picture is a digital portfolio of each student's on-going work and projects and includes feedback from advisors. TeacherEase provides a school progress report for math, science and art grade books and behavior logs; and an additional math-science website allows access to current math and science class and homework and other online resources for students and families.
 - Individual learning plans and internships provide weekly performance data for teachers and administrators and quarterly narratives inform parents about student progress towards goals.
- Effective teaching and goal-setting strategies enable students to demonstrate high levels of engagement in classroom lessons, good behavior and enthusiasm for learning.
 - The school has developed student learning plans and internships in order to empower students' ownership of the learning process and to develop their problem-solving capacities and critical thinking powers to serve the needs of the 21st century.
 - Planning for learning considers students' interests and passions which, in turn, leads to students feeling inspired to work hard. Teaching practice takes very good account of students' learning needs and provides them with the autonomy necessary to become accountable for their own learning and success.

- Administration and faculty have collaboratively developed a common instructional focus and shared understanding of a consistent and coherent school culture.
 - Teachers and administrators collaborate to actualize the principal's vision with the best interests of students in mind. All faculty work tirelessly to build relationships with students and their families in order to establish an effective partnership to foster a commitment to learning and accelerated progress.
 - The unique school schedule permits two full days of collaborative planning every week and all teachers, including the coordinator of internship, are engaged in structured professional collaborations, meeting weekly in teams, using an inquiry approach. These effective systems ensure immediate actions to keep students on track.
- Teacher teams and individual teachers meet regularly to analyze a range of internal data to identify students in need of additional supports in order to set, monitor, and revise goals to enable them to achieve essential learning standards.
 - Five teacher teams, along with other staff meet weekly to review student transcripts, ARIS reports, individualized school-generated progress reports, narratives, student work samples and, twice-yearly student exhibition data. Student projects are directly connected to learning plans, and are closely monitored for progress, providing the data for interim evaluations by teacher teams.
 - Teachers visit with internship mentors and mentees, and collaborate with the internship coordinator. This ensures that students' needs are met in internships and are linked to credit accumulation, aligned to State indicators and lead consistently to Regents completion.
- The principal has established effective systems for school-self-evaluation, review, and modification of practice with a clear focus on improving student learning.
 - The principal and his team analyzed first year data and noted the leading indicator of academic success was the added value from the initial seven internships. The creation of the position of coordinator has made the internship a reality for over 70 students.
 - The Saturday Academy and after-school Reading Empowerment Club further support teachers' understanding of how to effectively scaffold the learning process for struggling students. They explicitly teach how to harvest and leverage information and data from their reading by incorporating research-based strategies, such as the 6+1 traits of writing, preparing students for the rigorous demands of high level work.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a deeper understanding of curriculum design and standards alignment in order to establish a consistent and coherent process that identifies the key standards to emphasize.

- School leaders and faculty have created curriculum aligned to State standards, but have not yet developed a rationale for a process to enable staff to identify which key standards to emphasize.
 - Learning plans and internships are developed collaboratively by advisors and students but are only broadly aligned to State standards, leaving students without a focus on essential standards in order to complete high school credentials in a timely fashion.
- Develop a deeper understanding and use of predictive data, including ARIS data, for incoming ninth graders in order to pre-empt intervention classes.
 - Individual teachers and teams gather and analyze data that broadly aligns with both State standards and the taught curricula, thus providing a limited perspective of the effectiveness of coherent curricular and instructional decisions.
 - Learning projects leave much responsibility for alignment to State standards to students, which results in inconsistent practice and patchy outcomes.
- Ensure consistency of practice between teachers and departments in providing feedback to students and families about student progress and opportunities for support for enrichment.
 - Quarterly progress reports and narratives offer broad recommendations to students and their families, but do not include specific next learning steps aligned to State standards.
 - The three on-line resources for students and their families primarily monitor progress on learning plans and focus on math, science, and art. Without additional and specific resources, it is not possible for parents, students and teachers to access literacy progress.
- Ensure that the monitoring of teaching and learning is effective in identifying differentiated goals and expanded supports for teachers at different stages of their profession.
 - The structure and organization of the school place excessive demands on the energetic, committed, and smart teachers who do not presently receive sufficient support in designing project-based work and managing students' learning.
 - Designing curriculum is a challenge for even the most experienced of teachers. This school has dedicated teachers, but many have limited experience in curriculum planning and need additional supports to help them align projects to State standards and analyze student work. Currently the school does not provide sufficient mentoring, team teaching, coaching or other professional opportunities.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Frances Perkins Academy	△	▷	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<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?		X		
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?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	
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.				
<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?			X	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

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.							
<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				
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
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.							
<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				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X				
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.							
<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				
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed