

# **Quality Review Report 2009-2010**

**High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry**

**High School 299**

**122 Amsterdam Avenue  
New York  
NY 10023**

**Principal: Stephen Noonan**

**Dates of review: November 19-20, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Doris Unger**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The High School for Arts, Imagination and Inquiry is a high school with 429 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 41% Black, 53% Hispanic, 2% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 58% of the students enrolled and girls account for 42%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 79.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

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

The principal clearly articulates his vision of a school working collaboratively to prepare students for high achievement. He encourages parental engagement to support his vision for increasing student progress, however, improving parents' participation in such matters continues to be a challenge for the school. In spite of this, school leaders, the faculty and partner organization, the Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education (LCI), work together to provide a rigorous arts-based curriculum, and a nurturing and supportive learning environment focused on college readiness. It graduated its first class in June 2009.

Teachers engage in structured professional collaborations through teams. Even though there have been changes in leadership roles, all inquiry teams continue to work effectively. Grade level and content area teams meet regularly to examine and analyze data such as: attendance reports, scholarship data, credit accumulation reports, and Regents examinations in order to identify areas of strength and aspects for improvement. School leaders and faculty are reflective and refer to prior Progress Reports and Quality Reviews to guide and prioritize their next steps towards accelerating student learning. This data driven approach has helped the school set and monitor the goals of English Language Learners and Special Education students but this sort of work has not yet been extended to other subgroups.

The school uses data to drive instructional and organizational decisions such as determining course offerings and developing its Comprehensive Educational Plan. Although the school effectively gathers and analyzes a wide range of data to determine school-wide goals, it has yet to systemically include interim benchmarks to action planning that more accurately tracks progress towards goals. Consequently, curricular and program adjustments are either not prompt or indeed made, to ensure that goals are met within set timeframes. This in turn reduces the ability of the school to inform students and parents of the progress being made. Teachers value their time allocated for structured professional collaboration but the school has yet to develop systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the work of teacher teams. Therefore teacher leaders are not providing the feedback needed to further that part of the work for raising student achievement or improving pedagogy. Positively though, data is used to identify the direction and focus of professional development, design after school programs as well as to schedule Academic Intervention Services. Saturday and after-school programs include opportunities for students to attend cultural events and enroll in college level courses free of charge. Teaching artists provide academic and youth development interventions raising student achievement and interest.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has developed a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes towards learning that support the academic and personal growth of students.
  - The school has a safe and inclusive environment with a calm and positive tone. Students are known well by at least one adult in the school as well as by a member of the LCI Saturday and after-school program to provide academic enrichment and guidance support. Additionally, students have access to and are referred to St. Luke's, an on-site clinic that provides medical as well as mental health services. Appointment times are conducive to student schedules, reducing the need for students to be absent from school due to medical appointments.
  - The school provides a rigorous arts-based curriculum focused on college readiness. The range of arts programs offered by a small school pleasantly surprises students and parents. Students especially enjoy having teaching artists in their subject area classes, stating, "It makes the class interesting", and, "I like when they are there." Consequently, the hands-on activities provided by the teaching artists leads towards greater classroom participation and active engagement.
- The school makes good use of data to identify school level needs, modify curriculum and create intervention programs to improve student outcomes.
  - School leaders and faculty analyze data including attendance, suspension data, the Learning Environment Survey, scholarships reports, the progress reports and Regents results to create a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, the school has revised its curriculum to improve coherence around the vision and mission of the school. It has integrated the arts and Capacities for Imaginative Learning across the curriculum, and has designed after-school and Saturday programs to meet the needs of some student subgroups.
  - Students' progress is closely monitored with an eye on those who are at risk of becoming "off-track" or at risk of failing based on a range of factors, such as a spike in absenteeism or lateness or those with multiple subject class failures. The school has successfully designed systems for the early identification of this subgroup resulting in the opportunity for early intervention to get them back "on-track."
- The school effectively partners with outside organizations to provide youth development and support services to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of students.
  - Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education, a partner organization, sponsors trips to the opera, art exhibits, and theater performances that helps the school incorporate the arts and Capacities for Imaginative Learning to enhance academic rigor. Other partner organizations provide students with the opportunity to attend courses on a college campus

either to accelerate or make up credits during the summer months. These partners provide academic and positive social venues that motivate students to want success and to have an interest in learning.

- All teachers engage in professional development around classroom management strategies. New teachers may receive additional support from mentors, coaches or a member of the administrative team to ensure that a respectful classroom atmosphere exists, where all students feel nurtured and secure participating in their learning.
- School leaders effectively structure time and use resources to allow groups of teachers to plan collaboratively with a focused on accelerating student learning.
  - All teachers are members of inquiry teams that use data to identify specific learning issues among student subpopulations. They meet regularly to analyze student work that ultimately drives curricular and instructional adjustments. Most recently, they have identified CRAFT (collaboration, reflection, adaptation, focus tools) as an instructional strategy that will be implemented by classroom teachers to deepen student learning. Teachers engage in rich conversation about the use of this strategy in their classrooms and share their experiences, exchanging what has worked and what has not.
  - This year, the school has subscribed to *Atlas Rubicon*, a web-based platform for posting curriculum maps, posting shared resources and best practices. Inquiry team members contribute to the site resulting in teachers taking ownership of the work that affects their students' learning.
- To raise achievements, the school uses a data-driven approach to set attainable yet ambitious goals for English language learners and special needs students.
  - Individual teachers and teacher teams analyze data to identify students or groups of students in need of additional supports. They use several data sources including NYSESLAT results to formulate individual student plans and set individual student goals for English language learners. Similarly, members of the school community work in teams to examine scholarship reports and state assessments to collaboratively develop the Individual Education Plans for special education students.
- Members of the school community consistently communicate high expectations for behavior and academic performance to students and their families.
  - Teachers share the responsibility of maintaining order in the hallways and classrooms. They make telephone calls to inform parents of negative classroom behaviors including lateness and absences as well as informing parents of late or missing homework or poor performance on a test. The parent coordinator communicates regularly with families to report student absences, invite parents to school functions and monthly meetings.

- The principal strongly encourages parent involvement in the school decision-making process and enlists their participation on the School Leadership Team. The Comprehensive Educational Plan is prepared by team members who work together to identify school-wide goals and to align resources that support the shared vision and mission of the school.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Extend the work of gathering and analyzing data by organizing the information to identify trends and patterns to create action plans focused on elevating achievement for all students.
  - Currently, the analysis of data takes place routinely however, the identification of trends and patterns does not occur for all student subgroups. Consequently, the development of action plans to improve student performance is uneven. For example, the school uses a system to monitor student arrival but the attendance patterns for particular subgroups of students have not been disaggregated and used to identify intervention strategies.
- Extend school-wide systems for monitoring student progress and sharing that information with students and their families.
  - Individual teachers use classroom level tools to track student progress however, the tools are not common within departments or across grade levels. Common assessments including developing “standardized” rubrics that tell students and their parents what students know and what they still need to learn is still a work in progress.
  - The frequency and type of feedback teachers provide students and their families vary from teacher to teacher. Tracking student performance and using the information to adjust school-wide plans is only just emerging.
- Collect and analyze current data to assess progress towards long-term goals accurately.
  - Although the school engages in long-term planning and has incorporated the recommendations of prior Quality Reviews, it has not established interim benchmarks to evaluate instructional and organizational decisions that lead to the adjustments needed to meet school-wide goals.
- Use data to assess the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies.
  - Although teacher teams meet regularly, school leaders have not yet collected data, reviewed agendas or compared minutes to gain a clear picture of each team’s work. As a result, the school cannot evaluate teacher team effectiveness or the professional collaboration necessary to accelerate student learning or improve pedagogical practices accurately enough.
  - The administration is not using students’ assessment data to specifically identify the mentoring needs of new teachers and therefore, support is not sufficiently differentiated.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

<b>School name: High School for Arts, Imagination, and Inquiry</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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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>							
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>