

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2009-2010**

**Professional Performing Arts High School**

**328 West 48 Street  
New York  
NY 10036**

**Principal: Keith Ryan**

**Dates of review: October 22 - 23, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Francesca Peña**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Professional Performing Arts is a high school with 449 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 28% Black, 18% Hispanic, 48% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 0% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 25% of the students enrolled and girls account for 75%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 95%.

### Overall Evaluation

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

The school actively promotes a positive learning environment that fosters personal, social and academic development. Students are very happy, articulate and respectful. They enjoy coming to school and testament to this is the school's high attendance rate.

The curriculum provides a wealth of opportunities for challenging students. Exposure to many aspects of the performing arts of the highest standard challenges every student to excel. The school's collaborative culture is reflected through the phenomenal range of partnerships it has with nationally renowned organizations and professional groups within and beyond the arts. Middle school students develop key skills through a three-year sequence that covers musical theater, drama, singing and dance. High school students participate in performing arts for at least two hours each day. However, the challenge ahead is to ensure that the academic program reaches the same high standards. Students articulate the wish to have access to more advance courses in and out of the school.

Parents appreciate the way in which they are welcomed into the school and confirm that communication has drastically improved after their input in the school survey. As a result, they are more actively involved in supporting their children's education. Teachers track students' progress systematically and support them assiduously if they are not reaching their potential. One of the school's collaborative teams is the "Child Study Team". This team's primary goal is to support struggling students using appropriate interventions, tracking the outcome of those interventions and getting them back on the academic success track.

While there is evidence of effective collaboration in setting goals for student outcomes and planning to ensure progress, such commendable practices are limited in some academies and in specific subjects, especially in grade 8. The principal is fully aware that the development of teachers' skills in differentiating instruction to meet individual needs is an area for improvement. Professional development activities are planned to address this. The school has developed five results-oriented and data-driven professional developments strands or teacher teams to improve teacher practice and accelerate student learning. This new collaborative structure is not sufficiently well aligned with school goals and assessments to have maximum impact. Currently, staff do not make effective use of data from a growing range of assessment tools to measure student progress, or to identify changes necessary to improve instruction and revise academic goals.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Relationships among students and staff are warm and respectful, resulting in an environment that is conducive to learning.
  - The school's "Honors Code", which clearly sets out the goals and aspirations by which students can work together, has reduced principal and superintendent suspensions to zero
  - The high attendance rate of 95% indicates that students are happy and want to come to school.
- Teachers work collaboratively and passionately to share analyze data, and to share ideas and good practices to continually improve student learning.
  - All teachers are members of a collaborative inquiry teachers' team that they have selected to join based on personal interest and relevance. This allows teachers to differentiate roles and activities that best suit their learning styles for the students' benefit.
  - The work of every team is embedded into the school day, such that teachers are using their own classes, assessments, curriculum lessons, practices and students as professional development material and action research.
- The school has effectively engaged the parents as partners in supporting their children's achievement and personal growth.
  - The school's communication of high expectations to students and families has lead to the involvement of a large number of parents in decision making, coordination of school events, and active participation in school meetings.
  - Parents have developed additional funding sources in collaboration with the school and partners to support the performing arts program.
- The principal has made some data-driven strategic organizational decisions that have led to excellent student results.
  - The school created a "Freshman Forum" class for all incoming ninth graders in order to provide a smooth transition into high school. As a result, ninth grade students' attendance is very high and these students are progressing very well in all their classes.
  - The academic intervention program (AIS) has led to clear gains in the school's lowest third population, as evidenced by the higher credit accumulation among this group, higher passing rates on Regents exams and improvements in the classroom.

- Administration and faculty work collaboratively to develop a broad and high quality performing arts and academic curriculum.
  - High school students major in one of four areas in the performing arts.
  - The percentage of students in the middle grades at proficiency levels in English language arts is 97.4 and the percentage of students in the school's lowest third making at least one year of progress in English language arts is 88.5%
  
- Strong partnerships with professional groups and educational institutions contribute significantly to the students' academic, personal and social development.
  - This year, the school partnered with Rosie's Broadway Kids to provide musical instruction to the musical theater majors. Students experience a four-year sequence of professional studies in musical theater, dance, singing and acting, which prepares them for the best college musical theater programs in the country.
  - Tutors from New York University come to school on a regular basis and not only tutor the students in need but also serve as their mentors enabling them to engage more actively in learning. .

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

- Refine the goal-setting process to make it coherent and consistent so that the school has the necessary information to evaluate the impact of its actions.
  - Teachers' goals are not aligned with the school's goals which makes it difficult to evaluate the impact of professional development.
  - Goals do not include a precise, measurable outcome for each interim checkpoint to enable teachers and school leaders to monitor student progress.
  
- Promote greater consistency in differentiated instruction so that lesson planning reflects challenging tasks that accommodate different learning styles.
  - There are some strong pockets of teaching where differentiated instruction is beginning to show signs of consistency of usage. However, this practice is sparse and has not yet to impact teaching specifically in the lower level mathematics classes.
  - Teachers' plans do not include differentiated tasks or assessments to evaluate student learning.

- Implement a strategic action plan for the middle school grades specifically in the area of mathematics and ensure rigorous monitoring procedures.
  - The percentage of students making at least one-year's progress in mathematics in the middle grades is much lower than the school's peer horizon group. Based on mathematics classroom observations on the middle grades, purposeful grouping and differentiated tasks were not evident.
  - Because the mathematics department in the middle grades does not benefit from a math coach, teachers do not support in interpreting summative and formative data to inform instructional practices and to plan for differentiation, which inconsistent in these grades.
  
- Ensure that the focus for the work of teacher teams is purposely aligned to school instructional goals in order to improve instruction and student outcomes.
  - The school has implemented the structure for five collaborative teams, but these teams have not yet aligned their focus to instructional goals, limiting their ability to build instructional and organizational coherence or to evaluate the impact of the teams' work.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

<b>School name: Professional Performance Arts High School</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>