

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

Legacy School for Integrated Studies

**High School 429
34 W. 14th Street
Manhattan
NY 10011**

Principal: Gregory Rodrigues

Dates of review: April, 13-14, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Kathleen Tuttle

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Legacy School for Integrated Studies is a high school with 380 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 46% Black, 46% Hispanic, 3% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 76.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped with proficient features.

Parents and students concur that the small size of The Legacy School for Integrated Studies assists in the creation of an environment of personalization and caring. Students acknowledge that teachers are always ready to support their academic, social, and emotional needs. The principal and teachers are committed to establishing a safe and respectful school community. Enact, one of the school's outside partners, holds workshops for teachers, parents, and students on topics that support students social-emotional growth, which leads to increased student achievement. Because attendance is an on-going issue, Enact has developed effective workshops with interactive role-play to explore and successfully communicate the importance good attendance.

The principal uses the budget to make strategic decisions in support of the school goals. The teachers have been working with consultants to revise their curriculum maps so these are aligned to the State standards. Substitutes have been hired to facilitate the teacher planning time throughout the year. In addition, time for teacher teams and departments was built into the schedule to promote purposeful collaboration among the faculty. While teacher teams meet weekly, data collection is inconsistent, and they do not always analyze the data usefully in terms of trends, strengths, or needs of student subgroups. This limited use of data makes it difficult to implement differentiated instruction to support students' learning needs effectively.

Summative assessment from Regents and scholarship reports are used annually to evaluate the curriculum. Organizational decisions support the data for remedial classes to assist students in passing the Regents, which allows students to accumulate the necessary credits toward graduation. Some students can articulate a long-term goal of passing Regents, but the lack of interim goals and specific measurable feedback hampers their progress toward meeting those long-term overarching goals. The school has yet to establish a system for evaluating progress towards school-wide goals as well as monitoring teacher team goals.

Teachers in grade level teams welcome opportunities to participate in collaborative inquiry and are using this approach to strengthen instruction and raise learning outcomes, albeit with a narrow focus. Other opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development are limited by the exclusive use of an outside consultant, which hinders the school's ability to nurture future leaders. It is also difficult for teachers to reflect and revise their practice in the absence of good feedback on best practice. The absence of a professional development plan leads to unclear expectations for teacher development in establishing a common instructional focus based on data.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Students benefit from a standards-based curriculum with common assessments that engages them in their learning.
 - The school uses summative data from the Regents and scholarship reports to create and revise their curriculum maps. Horizontal alignment of the curriculum has been achieved and teachers indicated that vertical alignment between content areas is the next step. This has led to the establishment of common formative assessments in math and English.
 - Advanced and remedial courses successfully engage students by meeting their specific needs. Students describe an advanced history class as “hard” but express pride in working diligently to earn good grades in the class. Students who have found passing the global history Regents challenging have experienced success after taking a Regents prep class to hone their essay writing skills.
- Teachers in grade level teams welcome opportunities to participate in collaborative inquiry and are using this approach to strengthen instruction and raise learning outcomes.
 - A majority of teachers participate in grade-level inquiry teams around the school-wide goal of improving literacy skills with the intention of improving comprehension rates for target students. Teachers use information gathered from ARIS and Scantron to determine long-term goal setting for the team.
 - Each inquiry team has two members who participate in the school’s professional development team. This team decides on the professional developed offered throughout the year based on the data received from the teacher teams. In addition, the team has a monitoring role and provides feedback to the teacher teams with the aim of improving teacher practice in literacy across the content area so that instruction positively influences learning outcomes.
- The principal makes informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in learning.
 - Teacher and student time is clearly aligned to the Comprehensive Educational Plan. Weekly time is scheduled for department meetings and grade level teams to meet for the purpose of discussing student achievement and planning collaboratively.
 - Professional instructional consultants are a significant component of the school budget supporting the school in achieving its goals to increase student achievement in English and math. The increase in freshman and sophomore credit accumulation indicates that the support of consultants is improving teacher practice in those content areas.
- Effective student support services and collaborations provide students with a wide range of opportunities to grow academically and socially.

- The school's partnership with Enact supports dropout prevention by providing a ninth grade advisory for students. In addition, artists in residence classes explore social and emotional issues through theater as a support for students. Parents and students agree the workshops on resolving conflict and absenteeism have been beneficial in forming students' positive attitude toward school.
- Teachers have benefited from professional development from Enact to increase their understanding of high school students' social and emotional needs. Teachers are considered very supportive in whatever way is needed. Students speak confidently about the additional help they can get from teachers during 9th period every day or during Saturday school. This additional support increases their understanding of the content, thereby improving both their self-esteem and achievement.
- School leaders and faculty have established structures to evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional, and organizational decisions with a focus on improving student learning.
 - The school has formalized the way in which it determines the effectiveness of decisions intended to accelerate progress and raise student achievement. Teachers and school leaders review Regents performance using item analysis, the progress report and scholarship data to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction leading to decisions on student programming and curriculum revisions.
 - Analysis of the scholarship reports and January testing data led to creation of Regents prep classes for English and math where students who had failed, or were in danger of failing, a subject were placed. As a result of the smaller class size with instruction targeted to students' specific needs, the school is experiencing higher passing rates reflected in a 20% increase in graduation rates in the last two years

What the school needs to improve

- Consistently examine student achievement data to identify trends and subgroup needs in order to apply strategic curricular and instructional adjustments across classrooms.
 - Teachers analyze results of exams and diagnostic assessments to determine instructional objectives, but do not consistently analyze authentic work samples. This limits in-depth understanding of strengths and specific sub-skill needs, and compromises the successful implementation of targeted strategies across content areas.
 - The school had common periodic assessments built into their curriculum, but the results of these assessments are not analyzed with an eye towards identifying trends and the needs of subgroups. This limits the school's ability to determine strategic, differentiated interventions school-wide with the aim of increasing achievement for all students.
- Develop focused goals with specific actions in long-term planning, and a strategy for measuring progress, so that the school community can fully understand and support work toward interim and long-term goals.

- There are school-wide, departmental, and some student goals established throughout the building. However, there are no clearly delineated on-going plans for academic, professional, or community outreach to establish both a coherent effort and concurrent measurement of success, supported by specific feedback to students and families.
- Teacher teams use Scantron and Acuity to track progress for their target students. However, the lack of benchmark goals for student subgroups leads to ineffective practices for revising instruction and assessment practices to benefit student learning.
- Promote greater consistency in using data to differentiate instruction so that lesson planning reflects purposeful groupings, tasks accommodate different learning styles and questioning extends thinking, thereby maximizing learning.
 - Instruction is not consistently or deeply enough differentiated in most classrooms, where all students are expected to tackle a given task in the same way. Student groupings are not usually purposeful and lessons are not often planned to address students' diverse needs.
 - Presently, accommodations for special education students and English language learners are not consistent across all content areas. The curriculum maps lack differentiated plans for these two subgroups to scaffold their learning and ensure success for all students.
- Refine action planning by developing interim goals and benchmarks for all plans so that progress can be measured, adjustments made, and success evaluated.
 - The long-term plan to achieve school goals is detailed in the Comprehensive Educational Plan. However, there is no formal structure or timeframe to measure progress toward these goals throughout the year. The lack of measurable benchmarks means that opportunities are missed to refine actions based on periodic assessments.
 - Teams of teachers and individual teachers have long-term goals for target students. However, students are unaware of their goals and systems for measuring progress towards interim goals have not yet been developed.
- Implement a professional development plan, aligned with whole school and teacher goals, develop leadership potential, and ensure that rigorous monitoring procedures are introduced to evaluate the impact of actions on achievement.
 - Teachers receive little periodic feedback to enable them to reflect on their skills and improve their practice. Individual goal setting for teachers is informal with no link to the school goals or the data from the previous year's summative assessments. The lack of a formal professional development plan weakens the development of a strong, common, instructional focus school-wide.
 - Outside consultants provide professional development in the areas of literacy and math. Currently, there are limited opportunities for faculty to develop and practice leadership.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Legacy School for Integrated Studies	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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