

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

City-As-School

**High School 560
16 Clarkson Street
New York
NY 10014**

Principal: Antoinette Scarpinato

Dates of review: June 3 - 4, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Elaine Gorman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

City-As-School is a transfer high school with 698 students from grade 10 through grade 12. The school population comprises 37% Black, 39% Hispanic, 17% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 79.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

City-As-School is a nontraditional academic high school that links its school based resources with those of New York City. Experiential learning at highly structured internships and in classroom contexts provides opportunities for students to demonstrate knowledge of concepts and lifelong skills. The principal passionately leads a vision for students' reengagement and ownership in their education, which the vast majority of the staff, families, and students support as they move toward graduation and college. Very positive relationships create a trusting and respectful atmosphere where alumni return to teach and students push each other. Students value the responsibility they have to plan, organize, schedule and keep track of their learning. Strong emphasis is placed on building student emotional development as foundational to reclaiming academic success and results in six-year graduation rates near 75%.

Because of the unique admissions pattern of the school, staff developed tools to assess individual student abilities and needs at entry and credits gained toward graduation. Based on data, a personalized route for each student is developed to ensure that they graduate in the shortest possible time. Planned changes to the entry process will further support students. Additionally, teams of teachers frequently review student competencies in content and process skills, calibrating their expectations using rigorous rubrics, with a focus on the completion of the commencement portfolio. At the school level, monitoring is highly consistent, but due to the unique cycle programming, school leaders must analyze a variety of spreadsheets to gain a complete view of strengths and needs, making the work more cumbersome.

There is an exceptionally high degree of teacher collaboration through academic and social service teams and intervisitations. While this is substantive work and there are positive outcomes, greater use of inquiry methodology would help to verify cause and effect of action taken. The work of the English Language Arts team is emerging as a model, but the total staff is not yet fully informed of their work. The school does disaggregate data to evaluate whether different groups of students achieve differently, even more so since the last Quality Review. However, because of the rolling admissions and nature of needs of students, traditional subgroup analysis is not sufficient. Without slicing the data views to the examine issues presented by the uniqueness of the school, a clear trajectory to improve repeating short-term goals is not present.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Staff and students collaborative to develop flexible and differentiated curricula, which are taught in school and through a series of well-developed internships, and include consistently embedded and substantial research.
 - Based on the interests of students, the staff creates interdisciplinary courses and extensive community internships aligned to state standards, with concept and process development across grade levels. As students enter four times a year, regular monitoring of course content and options occur, resulting in a high degree of relevance embedded in course content and increasing credit accumulation.
 - Robust research is an integral part of course work and internship, with students participating in the development of learning packets, based on rigorous rubrics. The result is high quality written student work using multiple sources and strong student voice in writing and in presentation.
- Based on coherent beliefs about how students learn, the school community develops highly individualized student programming with multiple entry points that culminate in high quality student products.
 - Facilitated by talented staff, students consistently engage in challenging and interdisciplinary learning experiences informed by student interests, resulting in credit earning. In classrooms, students collaborate in groups and using computers to create projects to further demonstrate their understanding of literature or culture. At internships, such as the Intrepid, students interact with professionals while explaining the relevant history.
 - Built on a collective belief that holding students accountable for their learning results in greater personal investment, the staff provides clear expectations for commencement portfolios through rubrics. Students not only demonstrate improvement in coursework and social interactions but also can articulate next learning goals and how to meet these goals.
- Relationships across the school are exceptionally warm, supportive, and inclusive, resulting in an environment conducive to high levels academic and personal success.
 - Current students as well as alumni, several who have returned to teach, speak with passion about the influence the school has had on their “fresh start and recommitment” to their learning. Staff and students call each other by first name, and students collaborate in appropriate school decision. Students speak with maturity, substantiate their point of view, and plan for their futures, demonstrating the school’s positive effects.
 - The school community is proud of the inclusive environment that results in extremely low incidences of violence or bullying. Students support and encourage each other, and peer reflection on written work is valued. Additionally, a LYFE center (Living for the Young Family Though Education) provides childcare services and parenting for students with children supporting their plans to graduate on time.

- A passionate school leader and faculty continually communicate high expectations to students and families, creating a high degree of cohesion to the school mission, along with demonstrated student outcomes.
 - An orientation for incoming parents parallels the student orientation. Along with the school mission, school leaders discuss the graduation portfolio and rigorous research expectations, reinforcing the supports to assure high-level achievement. Parents readily articulate that the home-school partnership reengages their children to school and internships motivate exploration of college bound careers.
 - A varied series of workshops targeting needs identified by families supplements monthly parent meetings, including financial aid for entering college, talking to your teen, accessing ARIS Parent Link, and preventing drug use. Parents collaborate on all decisions, which further their connection with the school and their children after less positive experiences in their previous settings.
- A committed staff effectively uses robust structured and organic professional collaborations to share, assess, and revise organizational and instructional practices to improve student outcomes.
 - The English department analyzed writing samples, attendance, and previous Regents results to regroup students to better prepare them for component retesting. In addition to reducing class sizes, teachers used professional time to share curriculum and best practices. All students who completed the retesting passed.
 - Teacher teams regularly review student work against rigorous rubrics, informed by student requirements for commencement portfolios. Peer reflection and intervisitations, both push and support their instruction, resulting in changes to curriculum and practice, such as the requirement for students to have multiple teachers approve student research. The transparency of practice results in calibration of high expectations by teachers for student work and improving student outcomes.
- The staff works collaboratively to consistently evaluate and modify assessment practices to improve teaching and learning and student support systems.
 - The “interview-to-graduation” team vigorously monitors achievement of students. Students now transfer from 83 schools and achieve a high degree of success, and through consistent evaluation, the team has designed an additional diagnostic at entry to refine supports for a highly diverse population. This ongoing monitoring of assessment and how it is used has resulted in better student outcomes.
- The school community, including internship mentors, has embedded structures for assessing and revising organizational, instructional, and student support decisions in response to student outcomes.
 - Students follow programs that place them at resource sites for an eight-week cycle. By integrating internships with class work and seminars, staff, mentors, and students regularly reflect and adjust Learning Experience Activity Packets to maximize learning. This alignment results in strong coherence between what is taught and how is taught.
 - The school’s use of resources ensures robust collaborations and supervision of internships resulting in consistent revisions to meet the

interests and needs of each student, such as a film editor assisting a student in making a documentary on the need for skateboarding parks.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the analyses of an array of data to create a robust picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, with a close eye on causes of data patterns, including subgroups, and the impact of actions on decision.
 - Since the last Quality Review, the school has begun reviewing results by gender and ethnic subgroups, and through the lens of the Transfer Progress Report. However the specific strengths and needs of students entering every quarter begs for more discrete sub groupings, such as students in their second cycle, where a dip in performance has been identified. Without a change in view, there are similar results to persistent student issues, in spite of considerable outreach.
 - The school consistently analyzes available data, including more recently, periodic assessments tailored to the school's program. However, without refinement to the slices of student data reviewed, precision in determining causes for some students not making expected progress is reduced.
- Refine data tools to maximize the use of individual student, classroom, and team data in analyzing school wide patterns and in making high leverage school decisions.
 - Tools to review individual student progress inform data kept by classroom and team, and are effectively used. However, due to the school's flexible organization, leadership must review multiple reports to gain a rigorous picture of the school's strengths and needs. While school patterns are reviewed and result in action, without a comprehensive tool, decision making requires more time and is vulnerable to omissions of data.
 - The school expects continuous improvement and is very responsive to external review, as demonstrated by the adding of science to the graduation portfolio as a result of a visit by the New York Performance Standards Consortium. While monitoring of results of actions occurs, the organization of the data does not fully inform teacher collaboration.
- Enhance the substantial professional collaborations by incorporating inquiry methodology to further analyze results of teacher practice on student outcomes.
 - The school community is exceptionally collaborative, but in most cases, inquiry processes are not fully used. As a result, the testing of assumptions about why students do not make expected progress does not result in verified changes to organizational or instructional practice.
 - The promising inquiry work of the English department has not yet been shared with the school community. Although the work is in the emerging phase, without modeling for the total staff during the process, the English department is without the input of their peers and the staff loses a valuable professional development opportunity.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: City As School High School	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