

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Albert Shanker School for Visual and Performing Arts

Middle School 126

**31-51 21 Street
Queens
NY 11106**

Principal: Alexander Angueira

**Dates of review: March 8 - 9, 2010
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Philip A. Composto**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Albert Shanker School for the Visual and Performing Arts is a middle school with 699 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 20% Black, 57% Hispanic, 7% White, 15% Asian and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 91.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The Albert Shanker School for the Visual and Performing Arts is a positive learning environment with high expectations for students' personal and academic success. The principal's effective leadership and vision has led to constant improvements since his appointment in August 2008. Students enjoy the curriculum that includes many opportunities for them to engage in the arts and learn through real-life contexts. However, the school does not offer students the State mandated course for a language other than English. All teachers are held accountable for the implementation of differentiated instruction. However, not all lessons are rigorous or challenging enough to accelerate student learning.

The school regularly gathers and analyzes a wide range of assessment data that creates a clear picture of students' individual needs. Plenty of data is available, both summative and formative, in all core subjects, including the use of student portfolios. These portfolios contain student work samples that illustrate progress over time and across all grades. Teacher teams meet regularly to analyze student work and establish goals which lead to improved learning outcomes. However, the school has yet to consistently provide adequate professional development to promote leadership roles which will allow teachers to share the responsibility of facilitating meetings. There is a clear link between outcomes from student assessment data and professional development planning. As a result, personalized training plans are focused on improving each teacher's expertise with the emphasis on raising student achievement and enriching their learning.

School leaders establish specific measurable goals to drive improvement in the school. These goals are very clearly communicated to, and understood by, all members of the school community. The school's Comprehensive Educational Plan has long-term goals for school improvement. However, it lacks interim measurable goals and an effective process for monitoring their achievement. Consequently, the school is not as effective as it could be in raising the bar and enabling student to make the best possible progress and perform at even higher levels.

The school makes very good use of external partners to ensure that all students' personal and academic needs are met. These partnerships offer a wide range of programs that support a safe school environment and accelerate student growth. Parents value the support they receive from the school. They are particularly pleased that the school is safe and that all staff respect their children. One parent said, "They treat the children like they are their own."

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school collaborates very successfully with community-based organizations to integrate youth development services that support and accelerate students' academic and personal growth.
 - The school collaborates with St. John's University GEAR UP Program. The program provides professional development for teachers on supporting students' social, emotional and academic growth. The program also encourages students to prepare and consider their future through a college education. College mentors and tutors provide the one-to-one attention and small-group activities that ensure that all students' needs are met. As a result, students are highly motivated to pursue a college education.
 - The school partners with the HEART Program to create compassionate citizens and contributors to the greater community. The program fosters a sense of responsibility for children to act upon their personal beliefs, cultivating empathy for animals, and as a result, decreasing animal abuse in our society. The program offers an effective way to reduce and prevent violence in school and at home and encourages students to strive for a sustainable society while protecting natural resources and the environment. This program has helped significantly in decreasing the number of Superintendent's suspensions.
- School leaders and faculty regularly collect a wide range of assessment data across grades and subjects areas, which shows clearly what students know and can do, and informs planning at all levels.
 - The principal collaborates well with teachers to collect and analyze data to improve student outcomes. The school's comprehensive use of conference notes, periodic assessment and the accountability tools are responsible for the effectiveness of school-level goal setting.
 - School leaders do a "data dive" to identify the strengths and challenges for individuals and groups of students. The data provides leaders with critical information regarding special education students' lack of progress. This results in purposeful and effective revision of organizational structures. As a result, all special education self-contained and integrated co-teacher (ICT) classes are departmentalized.
- School leaders help staff to generate differentiated professional development plans to meet individual skills and interests as well as school-wide goals.
 - In reviewing school data, leaders develop a comprehensive professional development plan that is aligned with school goals and curriculum. The assistant principals meet with all teachers to discuss their instructional practices based on the Santa Cruz Professional Teaching Standards. Individual professional development plans focus on these standards, which target the collection, analysis and tracking of student data to increase student achievement. As a result, teachers participate in risk-

free professional activities that help build capacity and enhance teaching practice with a focus on improving learning outcomes.

- Teachers regularly participate in workshops to sharpen their expertise on topics of interest. Classroom intervisitations with a specific instructional lens engage teachers in conversations about instructional practice. In addition, collaborative practices in teacher team meetings provide opportunities for teachers to share their expertise and deepen their professional learning with a focus on improving student outcomes.
- The principal has created a learning community that is well focused on student outcomes, with a vision to continue to accelerate learning.
 - School leaders clearly communicate school goals and action plans which result in the school community working together effectively to support student learning. The school consistently uses newsletters, the school messenger phone program, progress reports and emails to notify parents, students and staff of the instructional plans and practices that inform the school's direction.
 - Teacher teams meet regularly in common preps, departmental meetings and faculty conferences to establish focused goals and fully analyze student progress to improve learning outcomes across all grade and subjects. This results in teachers sharing specific action plans and effective lessons to support the school's goals in accelerating student learning.
- Uniform portfolios contain student work samples that illustrate clearly progress over time across all grades, enabling teams of teachers to examine collaboratively trends in student performance.
 - Each student has a portfolio in all core subjects that enables teachers to easily track progress and make classroom-level decisions. A grade 8 teacher stated that he used the data to differentiate his lessons.
 - Teams of teachers examine portfolios regularly to identify target students and modify instructional practices. The English language learners' team identified students who do not use appropriate subject-verb agreement when writing. As a result, the team implemented the instructional strategy of having students find examples of correct subject-verb agreement in favorite books or magazines. This results in an overall improvement in writing, evident in good use of grammar in student writing products.
- School leaders make effective strategic decisions to address identified challenges, and establish a safe and respectful learning environment.
 - The school partners with City Year to focus on attendance and promote a safe school learning environment for students and teachers. Specific students are targeted through two interventions with corps members making buddy calls to support their attendance and address specific individual needs. This has resulted in improvement of attendance school-wide and a safe environment that supports student and adult learning.
 - The school participates in the LEAP program in which students learn the cultural and social importance of urban dance forms from across the United States. After considering these movements in their historic and

geographic context, students create their own hip-hop dances, and perform them for other students in the school. As a result, students are motivated and actively involved in their learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Align the curriculum and its instruction to State standards to engage a variety of learners with different needs.
 - The school curriculum offers a wide range of high interest opportunities. However, students are not offered a second language to facilitate their attainment of the State intermediate learning standards. As a result, students are not meeting the State mandate, which requires the completion of at least one unit of study, defined as 180 minutes per week for the school year, in a language other than English before grade 8. Consequently, the school does not provide a comprehensive curriculum to fully engage and address the various learning needs of all students.
- Refine action planning by developing interim goals and benchmarks for all plans so that progress can be measured, readjustments made and success evaluated.
 - The school's long-term plans for its development are outlined in the Comprehensive Education Plan developed by the school leadership team. Additionally, the school monitors the performance of students at the end of each marking period and through interim progress reports. However, formalized practices to determine the progress of improvement plans towards interim goals are not fully embedded across all subjects. This results in the school's limited ability to consistently monitor progress in reaching goals for all students.
- Refine classroom instructional practices so that all lessons are rigorous, challenging and meet the needs of all students.
 - The school utilizes data to establish groups based on performance or skill, and teachers differentiate instruction in a majority of classes. However, even though lessons are differentiated, students are sometimes unchallenged and their individual learning needs are not always addressed through activities that further enhance their thinking.
- Establish processes to involve teacher teams in a range of whole-school planning through a more strategic approach to distributed leadership.
 - Teacher teams meet regularly to utilize data effectively to make informed decisions to improve student learning. However, the existing professional collaborations do not fully promote teachers' shared leadership roles as decision makers. As a result, teams do not take full ownership of actions that affect student learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: The Albert Shanker School for Visual and Performing Arts	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