

# **Quality Review**

# **Report**

## **2009-2010**

**High School of Teaching and the Professions**

**High School 433**  
**2780 Reservoir Avenue**  
**Bronx**  
**NY 10468**

**Principal: Gary Prince**

**Dates of review: March 25 – 26, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Elena Papaliberios**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

High School for Teaching and the Professions is a high school with 517 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 34% Black, 62% Hispanic, 2% White, 1% Asian students and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 39% of the students enrolled and girls account for 61%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 79.4%.

### Overall Evaluation

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

The strong instructional leadership of the new principal at High School for Teaching and the Professions has energized the staff and has focused the school's work on student learning and student outcomes. Every group met during the review spoke of the positive impact he has had on the entire school community. A teacher said, "We have now been given a direction and we know where we are going. We may not be there yet, but we know where we need to go". Parents feel that they are much more involved in the school through their participation in the "Principal's Roundtable" and recognize how much teachers push their children to succeed. Students are challenged in College Now and advanced placement classes.

This year, the school has created a strong professional learning community where every teacher is involved in collaborative teams. These are aimed at developing a standards-based curriculum, and uniform units of study. Teams are also creating uniform assessments with the opportunity to evaluate and modify their work throughout the year. Interdisciplinary teams at each grade level are headed by English teachers who also share literacy strategies across content areas. This has led to the beginning of teacher leadership development at all grade levels. The recent work on assessment for learning has made a very positive impact on the culture of the school. This has helped teachers to focus on the effectiveness of their assessments and on student outcomes.

The school does a good job at gathering and analyzing data at the school level, grade level and for subgroups. Staff not only use all the Department of Education's data sources but have gone beyond these and created their own tracking system. In addition, the school has purchased effective electronic programs to track student data.

The observation process at this school goes beyond formal and informal observations. The school has created "instructional intensives", where teachers are observed by a team of administrators and then provided with individual feedback and support. This is focused on improving student outcomes as well as at enhancing pedagogical skills. Reports from teachers indicate that this is a welcomed addition. They feel that the support teachers are receiving is leading to improved practices and improved student outcomes. However, most teachers do not differentiate learning in their lessons to meet the individual needs of the students in their classrooms.

Although the school has developed a student goal-setting process, this work is in the beginning stages. It has yet to capture a process for individual instructional goal setting based on in-class assessments in each subject area. In addition, the school has not yet developed a process to generate regular progress reports to send to parents.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- A strong professional learning community is highly focused on creating a standards-based curriculum, increasing student engagement, and using data to accelerate and sustain learning.
  - A visionary principal has created a professional learning community that is greatly supported by the faculty and is focused on improving student outcomes through student engagement across all subject areas. The entire school community was engaged in reading *Results Now* and used the book to develop a theory of action. This focuses on the creation of a standards-based curriculum and uniform units of study. It also focuses on the creation of uniform assessments with opportunities to analyze results in order to review and modify the delivery of instruction. The impact of this work is evident in all classrooms and supported by the staff, who are clear on the direction needed to improve student outcomes.
  - Teachers have opportunities to meet daily as members of subject and grade teams to develop instructional strategies and analyze student work. Weekly training sessions around the development of assessment for learning strategies have successfully resulted in a culture change that is focused effectively on student learning.
- Organizational and budgetary decisions have a positive impact through the use of technology and the creation of common planning time.
  - Sound budgetary decisions have been made through the purchase of Smart Boards, computerized student-guided instructional programs and a web-based data-tracking system. These support school-wide goals and the instructional program. The creation of the Super Saturday sessions has already demonstrated a positive impact on student outcomes through credit accumulation and Regents passing scores.
  - Effective programming enables all teachers to meet in collaborative teams daily, during period 8. This structure supports the development of a professional learning community and has created a culture of collaboration across departments in all subject areas.
- The observation of teaching and learning is effectively used to provide support and professional development in order to improve teachers' pedagogical skills.
  - The principal and assistant principal regularly conduct "instructional intensives" where they visit classes and then provide teachers with feedback to improve their practice. Staff support this non-evaluative process as a means to gain support in improving instruction and raising student outcomes. Additionally, this practice provides a very effective means for administrators to meet regularly with struggling teachers and provide individualized documented support that is monitored for further planning through a log of assistance.

- School leaders assess instructional practices to develop effective professional development activities. Teachers who are involved in the assessment for learning training successfully share and turnkey these skills with their colleagues. Staff are regularly involved in peer observations and the principal has arranged for teachers to observe teaching practices in other schools to enhance their practice. As a result, the school is developing a stronger, more skilled teaching staff.
- School leaders and teachers thoroughly analyze and organize data to identify trends at all levels and for relevant subgroups of students.
  - The school has developed an effective tracking system that is used by all staff to analyze their own student data as well as results for the whole school. Members of each grade-level team effectively use this data tool regularly to look at the group of students they are working with. Teachers regularly track and analyze a comprehensive range of data for students on the lowest third as well as for special education students. This has helped teachers to focus on all student outcomes and to direct specific strategies to students most in need. As a result, the school now provides support services on Saturdays as well as after school and during school.
  - The school widely uses available Department of Education data sources, such as ATS, HSST/STARS and ARIS. It has also purchased an on-line data system which automatically calculates the school's No Child Left Behind data for each cohort. As a result, the school focuses on the students who need to pass Regents exams in all subgroups so that the school can meet the State's adequate yearly progress target. This focus has impacted on programming practices as students are now scheduled for component re-test as well as review classes. The school already shows improvements in students' Regents results.
- The school regularly evaluates the effectiveness of teacher teams in order to assess the coherence of curricular, instructional and assessment practices.
  - Administrators regularly attend teacher team meetings to assess their effectiveness and collaboratively make adjustments to the work generated. An example of their impact is evident in the revision of the assessment for learning tools that have changed as teachers use them in classrooms. Teacher leaders have effectively been identified to support literacy development in all grade-level teams. This has created opportunities for distributed leadership to emerge at each grade level.
  - All teachers are members of various collaborative teams that are involved in developing, reviewing and revising a curriculum that is aligned with the instructional focus of the school. Teachers use an inquiry-based approach and regularly review student data, including student work, leading to modifications to the current curriculum. Distributed leadership structures are embedded in each of the teams and teacher input into decisions affects all departments across the school.
- The school has developed strong parent relationships and partnerships with outside organizations that support the academic, social and emotional development of students.
  - The principal has strong support from the parent community who meet with him monthly at the "Principal's Roundtable". They feel that this has

created a welcoming environment of collaboration and trust for parents and students. Students and parents indicate that everyone in the school knows the students very well and refer to them by name.

- The school's collaboration with a social services agency provides strong counseling services for all students. The school successfully uses the services of experienced social workers who know the students well to provide guidance, conflict mediation and college readiness services. Academic support is provided by Lehman College whose physical proximity, next door to the school, allows students to partake in academic classes through the College Now program. Other organizations provide tutoring, SAT classes and business classes, resulting in a strong support for the academic and social development of students.

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

- Build on curriculum practices to include rigorous and differentiated lessons that provide multiple entry level points for all students.
  - Teams of teachers meet in content area teams to develop curriculum. However, the lesson plans generated do not indicate differentiation of instruction based on the individual needs of students in their classes, and some students are not sufficiently challenged. Lessons do not always provide differentiation of content, or activities that would accelerate learning and help students make progress toward graduation.
- Provide parents with additional student progress information in order to increase credit accumulation, especially for the lowest third of the student population.
  - Information given to parents regarding student progress is based on report cards, transcripts and classroom assessments. However, the school does not generate progress reports using electronic tools that can be sent to parents in-between report card grades. Currently, parents do not receive information about action steps to help them focus on what their child needs to do to improve outcomes.
- Build on student goal setting processes to include individualized academic goals that are data driven and focus on the development of skills.
  - Students are articulate about the SMART goal-setting training they received this semester, which they used to set overall goals for their classes. The goals however, do not take into account careful data analysis and, therefore, are not yet focused on the development of academic skills.
- Establish a collaborative system to evaluate progress towards long-term goals.
  - Currently, the school has structures in place to evaluate the work of its collaborative teams. However, there is no process in place to evaluate the effect of long-term goals on student instructional outcomes.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: High School for Teaching and the Professions	△	▶	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
<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?			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	
<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?				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	

<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>	△	➤	✓	+			
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>	△	➤	✓	+			
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>	△	➤	✓	+			
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>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>