

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2009-2010**

**Fordham Leadership Academy for Business and  
Technology**

**High School 438  
500 East Fordham Road  
Bronx  
NY 10458**

**Principal: Richard Bost**

**Dates of review: March 2 – 3, 2010  
Lead Reviewer: Geri Taylor-Brown**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Fordham Leadership Academy for Business and Technology is a high school with 554 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 34% Black, 60% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 58% of the students enrolled and girls account for 42%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 73%.

### Overall Evaluation

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

The School is part of the Roosevelt Educational Complex Campus that houses multiple schools. Fordham Leadership Academy for Business and Technology is a place where parents feel assured that their child's best interest is the primary and constant focus of every staff member. The practice of presenting students and their families with eight progress reports during the school year has resulted in good parental partnering as exemplified by the interest shown at Parent Teacher Association meetings. This focus on keeping everyone informed is school-wide. The staff gathers annually to develop school goals that are shared with students and parents. While this is a solidly established practice, the school has not yet expanded this to include a regular year-round examination of data that guides both expedient and long-range instructional and organizational adjustments. As there are no benchmarks to adequately check interim progress towards the overall school goals the administration is unable to gauge the true effectiveness of their decisions and make timely adjustments. Additionally, differentiated goals have not been firmly established for individual students within subgroups. This has thwarted the school's ability to successfully implement pertinent interventions during the school year.

The principal works diligently with the cabinet to provide a positive learning environment. Students speak confidently about feeling comfortable and fully supported to succeed. They genuinely appreciate the opportunity to enroll in a variety of classes. Unfortunately, the school had to suspend one of the Career Technical Education classes as they upgrade technology. However, they have still managed to continue offering interesting and exciting elective classes including the Capital One Bank located in the building. This partnership class provides employment training for students and banking opportunities for staff members in this campus building.

All teachers are in the practice of examining a wide range of student data. This has been beneficial as they look at enhancing the curriculum of required courses. Teachers are very enthusiastic about discussing teaching practices but there is not consistent use of differentiated instruction. Some teachers share their successful techniques with colleagues and use a varied approach to activities. School growth in this area is being enhanced by the recently implemented professional development plan for each teacher. There are opportunities for examining, monitoring and refining teacher skills but rigorous enough procedures for this are not fully established. Teachers speak passionately about their commitment to work together. As one teacher stated: "I had to give up my independence. We are a team. We fail or succeed together."

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school offers standards aligned classes as well as academic and support interventions before and after school so that student learning requirements, learning needs, and interests are addressed
  - After examining student data, school leaders and faculty revamped the integrated algebra curriculum. This two period “couplet” design includes a class that focuses on the algebraic portion of the coursework and a class that focuses on the geometric portion of the coursework. As a result the passing percentage rate of students has increased by 21%.
  - The school challenges and engages a variety of learners by offering varied classes that range from advanced placement and *College Now* courses to credit recovery classes. Additionally, career-minded students work in the school’s fully operational Capital One Bank. These varied offerings serve as a motivation for improved student attendance and achievement.
- School leaders and faculty gather and examine a range of assessment data from multiple sources to plan and enhance curriculum that improves student achievement.
  - The school gathers data from a variety of sources. Careful examination of this information indicated trends, such as reading comprehension challenges that are currently the focus of the school’s developing inquiry work. As a result all teachers see improvement of reading skills as a critical part of their instruction.
  - The principal and the cabinet present student data to staff through their school-developed data system. This information is displayed throughout the hallways on posters. These visual reminders keep students and staff focused on the goal of student success.
- School wide goals are collaboratively developed by school leaders and faculty and are clearly communicated to all stakeholders who take ownership in cooperatively working to increase student success.
  - Student success is at the core of school-wide thinking and actions. One parent states that the school goal of graduation for all students can be obtained through “students passing classes and passing tests.” Interim assessment and reports show incremental increases in both areas.
  - The school leadership team has used all available data to develop school-wide goals. As a result, there have been some increases in exam passing rates as instructional themes, such as seen in the focus on reading comprehension and themed mathematics.
- The principal has worked hard in developing a calm and mutually respectful school culture which promotes a positive learning environment for all students.

- Students have a “Teacher-Mentor” who is their adult contact. Students say they “feel safe” in their school environment and can talk to at least one adult. This feeling of security motivates student to “do better”.
- Students express that classes “get you thinking”. Additionally, they speak proudly about the fact that their principal teaches a science class. Both of these learning opportunities are good examples and encourage students to succeed.
- School staff does extremely well in keeping parents informed and involved about their child’s progress in school activities.
  - In both English and Spanish, parents express their gratitude for a school that keeps them informed about their child’s progress and gives them information about how they can help their child with “class work, homework and going to college”. This positive approach has influenced the growth in ninth grade applications.
  - The Parent Coordinator offers varied information sessions for parents including the opportunity for training on the ARIS system. This has resulted in parents having immediate access to information about their children.
- Teachers eagerly participate in daily scheduled common planning sessions where they enthusiastically share instructional practices that have positively impacted student learning.
  - School leaders have wisely planned a daily common planning time for all teacher teams. A special education teacher shared how usage of her “student writing stations” boosted student interest and improved student “critical lens” writing skills.
  - Teachers meet in both content focused and grade focused groupings. As a result content subjects are commonly paced and there is a cross-disciplinary monitoring of student progress. This is resulting in incremental increases in student credit accumulation and Regents exam success.

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

- Develop a solid system for the careful monitoring of instructional practice and promote a consistent use of suitable methods of teaching to address the differentiated learning needs of students.
  - While course work is appropriately engaging not all teachers are sufficiently skilled in delivering effective instruction. Leadership monitoring has not yet been fully implemented to ensure that all teachers offer differentiated instruction consistently. Thus, not all student learning needs are properly supported to ensure academic success.
  - Some teachers offer a range of activities during class lessons but work products and processes are not varied. This results in high participation and interest by some students while other students are not engaged.

- Extend the analysis of data to include implementation of strategies to address the learning needs of subgroups of students and improve outcomes for all students.
  - School leaders and teachers review and analyze past and current student data. However, the principal states that they are just “in the process” of implementing a plan to use data to develop individualized learning goals for students in their targeted subgroup, namely the “C” group for students whose scores place their ranking in the lowest third of the school.)
  - The current school practice has established a blanket goal of credit accumulation and graduation for all students. The intervention for the “C” group students is the assignment of a teacher mentor for each pupil. Teacher mentors have not received training, nor is there any monitoring of the mentoring interventions. This has resulted in uneven and undifferentiated professional support with no measurable impact on student growth.
- Establish solid systems and structures that offer firm benchmarks and interim goals to track student progress and make revisions that are thoughtfully developed to continually improve student achievement.
  - The school has structures in place to annually examine data, develop plans and implement initiatives. However, there are no interim school-wide benchmarks established to adequately measure progress towards the overall school goals. Thus, the practice of sharing and discussing information within structured groups has not yet resulted in continued student progress.
  - School goals have not been consistent from year-to-year. For example, a examination of school goals over a two year period has ranged from implementation of 9<sup>th</sup> grade US History to the current early morning 9<sup>th</sup> grade college prep period. This allows too little time for consolidation and this inconsistency has adversely effected scholastic improvement.
- Refine teacher development to include a yearlong plan that is closely aligned with school goals and includes rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures that are directly linked to student progress.
  - Teachers attend myriad professional development events. However, there is not a direct or consistent link between what was learned, how it connects with school goals and how it should be applied in the classroom to improve learning. This lessens the opportunity for and impact on continued teacher growth.
  - In February, an assistant principal established the teachers, “Professional Teacher Portfolio”. This document outlines plans for helping staff enhance their skills but as the building of a comprehensive professional development plan for each teacher is at an early stage the true effect on students’ progress is unknown.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

<b>School name: Fordham Leadership Academy for Business and Technology</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+
<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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>

