

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

The Celia Cruz High School of Music

High School 442

2780 Reservoir Avenue

Bronx

NY 10468

Principal: Dr. William Rodriguez

Dates of review: December 16 - 17, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Michael L. Schurek

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Celia Cruz High School of Music is a high school with 364 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 30% Black, 68% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 7% 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 88.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The Celia Cruz High School of Music is a community that regularly celebrates the products of student work and achievement as they listen, watch and enjoy musical performances of the highest caliber, thereby building the self-esteem that enables their students to excel. Their unique seven-year partnership with neighboring Lehman College creates an articulated expectation of college attendance for all students that is embraced by the entire school community. The college provides facilities not available to the school in their own building, enabling the school's students to attain the highest levels of State achievement possible for music studies.

The administration, staff, students and parents have formed a true learning community. They support each other's social emotional and academic growth, resulting in the creation of a safe, respectful and nurturing environment conducive to sound character development, learning and success. Teacher teams and administrators collaborate regularly during "working lunch" meetings to design strategies to better meet student needs and adjust classroom practices. Teachers and school leaders use a vast array of formative and summative student data in all core subjects and grades to establish goals, identify trends, monitor progress and modify practice to increase student outcomes. However, tools have not yet been developed to organize and share this data, at a glance, during collaboration for classroom level decision-making.

Parents are very supportive of the school and welcome the valuable communication they receive. They especially appreciate the detailed progress reports they are given in between report cards, which keeps them informed of their children's ongoing progress. Students are inspired by the teachers and each other and value the small 'family' atmosphere where everyone knows their names and teachers reach out to help them with any problems they present.

Reflective professional development and collaboration has enabled the school to begin the process of developing leadership from within. However, at this time the school is not utilizing data to determine teacher team effectiveness, and is not using teacher teams to support leadership development.

The principal and his administrative team work in tandem with all staff members in a collegial manner and through their examples, maintain a people-centered environment that develops character and accelerates student success.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Students benefit from a standards-based broad curriculum that uses music to develop rigorous habits, which enable them to excel academically.
 - Students communicate the fact that they are expected to attend college and, with the help of their teachers, are developing note-taking skills to increase success in high school and beyond.
 - All students find learning engaging and motivating. A varied and rigorous music program attracts students to this school, resulting in the highest of rankings by the New York State School of Music Association. This ongoing achievement sets a very high academic tone throughout the entire school and enables students of all abilities to succeed.
- Relationships among students, teachers and school leaders are warm and respectful, resulting in a nurturing environment that is conducive to learning and supports the growth of students and adults.
 - Students praise the faculty's willingness to give up their own time to help them with both academic and personal problems. They also feel that their voice influences school-wide decisions through their presence on the school leadership team. Recent input from students has resulted in the development of a freshman mentoring program, math tutoring and the use of the school's public announcement system by students to communicate club activities, thereby empowering students and expanding their ownership of school developments.
 - The school is expanding elective courses at Lehman College as a result of the Learning Environment Survey results, which indicate a need for more course variety.
- Administrators and teachers meticulously gather a wide-range of data to understand individual student and subgroup performance, progress and learning needs.
 - Teacher teams supplement summative data consistently with classroom data to identify trends, track progress and adjust classroom practices. As a result, a trend regarding first period attendance has been identified as a problem. Tardiness causes students to fall behind in first period classes. The school is currently communicating this problem to students and parents and now has teachers available before the start of school to encourage students to arrive early. Data currently indicates improved first period attendance.
 - Teachers routinely gather pre-assessment data through mock Regents and other assessments before units of study in most subjects. They use this information to identify student strengths and weaknesses to differentiate instruction and support student needs.

- Parents are key partners in their child's education and are informed fully about school progress and their children's successes and needs.
 - The school communicates with parents regularly through a large array of methods including printed newsletters, website announcements, logged telephone calls and email announcements. As a result of parent suggestions during school leadership team meetings, the National Honor Society students now provide after school peer tutoring to students in need. This activity fosters student ownership, builds citizenship and contributes to increased student outcomes.
 - Family involvement in education is a high priority. The school welcomes parents through their open-door policy, which encourages parents to visit the school. Numerous musical performances take place during the year to celebrate student achievement. In addition to quarterly report cards, parents receive in-depth progress reports at the midway point of each marking period to keep them well abreast of their child's individual academic progress, enabling parents to become involved in their child's education.
- Individuals and groups of students identified with a particular need benefit from targeted, caring support according to their needs and so achieve success.
 - Music department teachers analyze audio and visual performance readiness to identify students who need additional support and differentiate their instruction to accelerate learning.
 - English language learners, special education students and students in the lowest third are instructed in smaller settings with differentiated instruction and materials to meet their needs. The recent Progress Report listed extra credit for exemplary gains for English language learners and special education students, the group that primarily makes up the lowest-third achievers.
- All teachers participate in collaborative inquiry and professional development to strengthen practice and raise outcomes.
 - The faculty conducts learning walks to visit each other's classrooms to share best practices. They work collaboratively, using an inquiry approach, to develop strategies to increase student outcomes. For instance, one team focused on developing strategies to improve reading comprehension in all curriculum areas. The 'annotating text procedures' they discussed have been shared with all departments and are becoming a school-wide practice to improve comprehension and expand thinking.
 - Recent professional development focusing on the use of ARIS has resulted in a growth of independence regarding the access and use of data to drive instruction, enabling teachers to regularly adjust classroom practices to meet student needs. One teacher uses ARIS to identify weaknesses and develops specific strategies for students to use to raise their Regent performance scores on document-based questions.

- The school's numerous partnerships with outside organizations and families support students in continual learning and promote their academic and personal growth.
 - Through its Integrated Service Center, the school provides professional development that enables teachers to recognize and act upon student needs by utilizing conflict resolution techniques or, if necessary, initiating child abuse reporting procedures to ensure students' social, emotional and academic growth.
 - Students independently seek the help of the guidance department to assist them with personal and academic issues. This office tracks attendance, credit accumulation and scholarship reports and personally assists students with college selection and the application process, resulting in a 98% college application rate for this year's 12th graders.

What the school needs to improve

- Create a strategic plan to ensure that teachers are able to meet regularly to improve classroom practice that provides equal access for all staff members and promotes accountability.
 - The school currently utilizes a "working lunch" approach to schedule their collaborative team teacher meetings. Teaching teams are able to use their time more efficiently when meetings are regularly scheduled, dedicated to events that allow them to focus on collaborative inquiry and to design plans for student accountability. School resources are not being utilized efficiently enough at this time to meet this need.
- Develop tools to enable teachers and school leaders to organize and share data more effectively to make school- and classroom-level decisions.
 - The teaching staff has made huge strides regarding their use of data, including classroom-level data, to drive instruction and develop and track student goals. However, consistent tools have not been developed within the school to organize and share this data. As a result, teaching teams conduct collaborative inquiry without accessing student data or student work and some teachers' classroom data is not as useful as it could be for making classroom-level decisions.
- Expand the use of data analysis to evaluate and revise, as needed, processes and programs within the school that lead to effective professional collaborations.
 - Because teacher teams have been recently organized, school leaders attend meetings regularly to evaluate their effectiveness through observation, but plan to use data to measure results and determine team needs to support improvement. The school administration regularly tracks and encourages teachers who are preparing to become administrators, but has not yet focused on using the teacher teams to support leadership development.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: The Celia Cruz High School of Music	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