



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Accountability and Achievement Resources
2009-2010**

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

**Felisa Rincon de Gautier Institute for Law and Public
Service**

**High School 519
1440 Story Avenue
Bronx
NY 10473**

Principal: Grismaldy Laboy-Wilson

**Dates of review: April 12 - 13, 2010
Lead Reviewer: Elena Papaliberios**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Felisa Rincon de Gautier Institute for Law and Public Policy is a high school with 410 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 24% Black, 72% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% American Indian, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 10% 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 87.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Teachers focus on intra- and inter- department level curriculum development, aligning their work with the New York State standards. However, classroom lessons do not yet include sufficient levels of differentiation or rigor in order to push students to reach higher levels of proficiency. Although advanced placement courses in English are offered, students are not provided with the opportunity to demonstrate proficiency through the exam, depriving them of the opportunity to earn college credit. The school's instructional vision includes a set of core beliefs, which are widely shared with all constituencies, and is included in observation reports to improve student outcomes. The principal and assistant principal effectively use the observation process to address not only the school's instructional vision but also to develop data-driven teachers' individual support plans for the year.

The school continues to struggle with instructional goal setting for students and subgroups of students. The school has begun the process, however, the goals are not yet skills based and they lack the structures to monitor, for individuals and subgroups of students, the progress made towards attaining set targets. This along with the lack of common assessments, and an inconsistent use of periodic assessment results, precludes the school from timely and suitable revisions.

Inquiry teams are effectively using student data and student work to develop strategies to support students' improvement in writing skills, and the social studies team regularly uses ARIS as a tool to document their work and to share best practices. They organize and aggregate student data so that trends in student performance is accessible to the entire community. However, the school currently has no structures in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the collaborative teamwork to assess the impact they have on student outcomes. Additionally, teachers set personal targets, but they are not yet monitored yearlong to measure progress or impact on achievement of students.

Practical programming and budgetary decisions support the academic and social development programs at the school. Grant monies are allocated to support character development through the 'Leadership Program' which is infused across all content areas and has helped to build a more positive learning environment. However, there is inconsistent feedback in regards to student progress and opportunities for enrichment in order for parents to help their children at home.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Collaborative teams of teachers effectively use the inquiry approach to determine strategies needed to improve students' Regents scores and classroom passing rates.
 - The social studies team used Regents' data to identify essay writing as a problem for all students. A specific focus on 14 students performing in the mid-range on the State rubric included the use of a graphic organizer to help with learning writing strategies for essay writing. Student work is showing positive results. Other teams, who also meet regularly during, before, and after school, address curriculum development and share strategies to improve students' Regents results. English teachers are effectively focusing on individual units, essential questions, and planning backwards from grade 12 to grade 9, to review and align the English curriculum across grade levels.
 - Distributive leadership is providing teachers a voice in the decision making of the school. Teacher leaders effectively facilitate the work of the teams. They organize the work around inquiry as all teachers have selected a group of students on whom to focus their work.
- The school's instructional vision is widely shared with the entire staff and is focused on improving student outcomes.
 - A clear and concise vision with a list of core beliefs drives the school's instructional agenda. It focuses on setting high expectations, higher order thinking skills, differentiation, infusing technology, and creating a positive culture. The entire staff is well versed in these beliefs and they work effectively to support the school's vision.
 - The school involves teachers in collaboratively setting goals and developing action plans as an outgrowth of looking at school-wide data. This has resulted in the development of a professional development program well matched to the needs of staff to support student achievement.
- School leaders effectively use the observation process to monitor teacher practice with a clear focus that includes professional development support.
 - The school's 'Teacher Individual Support Plans' are data driven and developed using results from observations and students' scholarship data. Timely feedback addresses individual teacher's needs and includes relevant actions such as assigning content-specific support from coaches and the support organization, and identifying suitable professional development to improve pedagogy.
- Curriculum alignment across grades in English language arts supports the school's instructional vision.

- Teachers are revising a grade 9 through grade 12 curriculum aligned to the New York State standards in order to provide a cohesive and aligned grade-to-grade course outline, and to scaffold the work in order to help students build writing skills across all content areas. Teachers use the Understanding by Design model to ensure congruence of instructional plans.
- Curriculum offerings present a wide range expanding from advanced placement course in English to courses that build on the school's theme of law and public service. Coursework is well supported by internships where students get to practice and experience what they learn in class.
- Strategic organizational and budgetary decisions support the academic program at the school.
 - The use of Circular 6 to reschedule the English department to provide common planning time has made a great impact in the school's ability to support the expansion of collaborative teacher teams.
 - Funding has been efficiently used to support the academic as well as the social aspects of the school and it is proactive in identifying grant monies to support their programs. They have used the Character in Education Grant to effectively infuse character education throughout the curriculum. A knowledgeable math coach was hired to train teachers and an advisor was added to support the school's clubs.
- Teacher teams regularly use ARIS as a tool to share best practices, to access student data, and to identify their inquiry students.
 - Teachers are well versed in the use of electronic tools such as ARIS to document student progress and to create community spaces to share the teams' work with members of different departments in the school resulting in a better understanding of student performance across teams. The administration makes good use of the cohort tool to track student data in order to make programmatic decisions.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance teachers' ability to set data-driven student goals to meet individualized and student subgroup instructional needs.
 - The school is not yet using data sufficiently to identify individuals and subgroups of students in need of additional support, or to set skills-based instructional goals that are regularly monitored and revised in order to improve student outcomes.
- Ensure that the use of assessments, across content-area subjects, is used to monitor school-wide, teacher team, and classroom level progress towards meeting yearlong goals.
 - Teachers use formative assessments to assess student performance. However, the school does not yet have common department-wide assessment tools, or regularly use the results from periodic assessments, to monitor progress sufficiently, or adjustments plans, to assure mastery of long-term targets.

- Parents are very pleased with the phone calls, emails and letters of outreach in regards to their children's well being. However, the school does not yet share with parents concrete goals with action plans in order that they can learn about and monitor the progress their child. This prevents parents from being fully involved in helping their children make further improvements in their work.
- Promote consistency in differentiated instruction based on data so that lesson planning reflects differentiation in content, process, or product.
 - Although teachers have been trained on Renzulli's work, many of the classrooms do not differentiate the work for students. Most lessons did not provide different entry points for students or include rigorous and differentiated activities in order to accelerate student learning. Students in the advanced placement English course students are not provided with the opportunity to sit for the exam precluding them from showing proficiency or earn college credit. .
- Develop systems to evaluate the effectiveness of the collaborative teams as well as established teacher goals in order to improve student outcomes.
 - Teams of teachers have been working all year in aligning the English curriculum; however, there are no structures to evaluate their impact on student outcomes. Administrators do not meet regularly with the lead teachers to assess their work and evaluate what impact it has in helping to accelerate student learning.
 - Individual teachers set goals at the beginning of the year using the SMART goal approach. However, currently there is not a process in place to monitor their progress or evaluate the effectiveness of their work on student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Felisa Rincon de Gautier Institute for Law and Public Policy	△	▶	✓	+
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>	△	▶	✓	+
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>	△	▶	✓	+
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