



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Grace Dodge Career and Technical High School

High School 660

2474 Crotona Avenue

Bronx

NY 10458

Principal: Roberto Hernandez

Dates of review: May 24 - 25, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Myrta Rivera

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Grace Dodge Career and Technical High School is a high school with 1439 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 32% Black, 65% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Native American and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 38% of the students enrolled and girls account for 62%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 81.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Grace Dodge Career and Technical High School provides both a general and a career/technical education for all students. The school offers four small learning communities and a humanities interdisciplinary program for all incoming grade 9 students. This structure allows students to obtain both a Regents diploma and technical career skills that prepare them for the world of work. School leaders and staff provide a safe, caring environment where students take leadership roles through their involvement in a student inquiry team.

The effective visionary principal has made drastic changes to the curriculum and organizational structure described in his five-year plan. His effective use of resources enhances the educational program through the influx of technology, providing time for teacher teams to meet and the creation of an office of curriculum, assessment and instruction. This office provides the school with highly qualified staff that spearheads changes to the curriculum, create and align assessments and provide professional development support to staff so that students receive high quality instruction. This instructional team has been successful in creating a standards-based curriculum aligned to uniform assessments that teachers use to develop student goals and differentiate instruction. Teachers benefit from professional development sessions especially on differentiated instruction. However, there is no differentiated support for teachers based on their needs. Teacher teams analyze student work and plan units of study to differentiate lesson planning that reflects the needs of targeted students. However, most lessons use technology to differentiate instruction, but do not use assessment data, learning styles or flexible grouping strategies to ensure multiple entry points for all learners. As many efforts are new or newly revised, there remains a high degree of uneven practice and insufficient rigor in some classrooms. Close monitoring of curriculum and instruction through regular meetings result in regular adjustments to the curriculum.

Highly effective data analysis forms the basis for tracking students by cohorts providing supports and interventions to assist students in achieving graduation requirements. Data tracking by colors provides an easy way for students, parents and faculty to understand the data. The school-wide slogan "Go Green" is an effective motivator for students and faculty to reach high expectations. Data analysis is the basis for goal setting at all levels. Teachers provide students with information about their progress, but this practice does not always result in feedback so students can articulate their next learning steps. School leaders provide feedback to teachers about their effectiveness; however, instruction is not rigorous.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's strategic use of resources and organizational structures support the school's instructional goals for continuous improvement and high academic achievement.
 - The office of curriculum, assessment, and instruction provides the catalysis for change to improve the performance of students and provide support to teachers as part of the five-year plan. This instructional team effectively aligns State standards to school goals by creating pacing calendars and school-wide assessments that improve instruction and student learning.
 - Teams meet during common planning time and a school-based option (SBO) provides additional time once per month for teams to meet. Inquiry teams use this time effectively to discuss student work and plan lessons that accelerate student learning.
- School leaders and staff create a supportive, calm and respectful environment for learning to take place that supports the social/emotional development of students.
 - The school provides a calm, respectful environment where learning takes place in small learning communities that embrace a career and technical field (CTE) and an interdisciplinary grade 9 humanities program. This allows for students to get to know adults who can help coordinate their academic and youth development needs. As a result, the majority of grade 9 students are on track to meet the required number of credits.
 - The peer mediation office has been renamed the intervention office and is headed by a social worker instead of a dean to support the academic and social/emotional development of students. Students' desire to create their own inquiry team became a reality and their voices heard when data from the Learning Environment Survey sparked in students a desire to want to improve the relationship between students and teachers.
- The principal and data team regularly gather and analyze a comprehensive set of data and create effective tools that monitor student progress to maximize student learning.
 - The principal and his data team gather and analyze data and create a "Go Green" slogan and charts that are easy to read with class specific data. All profile sheets use color indicators to track a student's progress towards graduation. Green indicates the student is on track, yellow indicates that a student is almost on track and red indicates that a student is off-track. The data, publicly seen by all members of the school community, supports the school's high expectations with the "Go Green" slogan seen all over the school. The principal uses this chart effectively by monitoring students in the red and yellow track regularly by analyzing periodic assessment data to ensure students meet graduation requirements. These actions support successful student outcomes.

- School leaders have structures in place to evaluate regularly the quality of curriculum and instruction to build alignment and coherence that optimize student learning.
 - The instructional team meets weekly to review the curriculum and make adjustments based on periodic assessment data and results of Regents exams. Exit tickets provide teachers with immediate feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching strategies and refine alignment between what is taught and how it is taught.
 - School leaders monitor closely the implementation and effectiveness of the one-year interdisciplinary humanities course that changes the curriculum for grade 9 Global History and English. A consultant provides support to the social studies teachers in teaching in double period blocks. The regular review of assessment data provides school leaders with information on the effectiveness of this new approach.
- The principal's positive leadership supports the vision of continuous improvement towards meeting students' academic and vocational goals.
 - The principal has created a thoughtfully designed five-year plan, with a clear focus on data analysis that supports the creation of the school goals. Using a color-coded system with interim checkpoints. School goals and action plans clearly align to the Comprehensive Education Plan and link to changes in the school and accelerated student learning that address increasing graduation rates and Regents diplomas.
 - A review of student performance data and cohort data generates a color-coded chart for each class with goals for accelerating student learning. Action plans include support programs for students to meet these high standards with special courses or services. Programs such as, tutoring, Saturday programs, Regents prep, credit recovery, evening classes, and on-line courses provide students with many opportunities to reach academic success.
- Teachers engage in effective collaborative teams using the inquiry approach to improve learning outcomes for all students through shared leadership.
 - All teachers are involved in collaborative inquiry teams that meet frequently to discuss curriculum and instructional issues that affect their selected students. The humanities inquiry team meets three times a week analyzing past Regents, looking at student work and developing interdisciplinary lessons, and next steps for their students in order to maximize student learning.
 - Distributive leadership is embedded in the work of inquiry teams where teachers take charge of agenda items and work collaboratively on improving instruction for their targeted students. A member of the team with a reading background tested students' reading ability and found that their reading levels were very low. Therefore, the team worked on differentiated reading material and strategies to assist these students with basic reading strategies and tutoring supports to accelerate their reading ability. Due to this action, the principal plans to hire another reading teacher for the next school year to assist those students deficient in basic reading skills.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand and deepen reflective practice where students assess their own progress so that they take ownership of their learning and can articulate their next steps.
 - Although some teachers use peer review and reflective practice forms periodically, daily feedback on student work products is not a widespread practice. Teachers write comments on most student work but do not articulate their next learning steps so that students can take ownership of their own learning.
 - Parents receive progress reports and report cards to inform them of the progress towards meeting school standards and expectations in a color-coded format so that it is easier to understand. However, the progress reports do not include next steps for students so parents can assist their children to reach high standards of excellence.
- Promote greater consistency in differentiating instruction, based on data, so lesson planning reflects purposeful grouping, differentiated activities, and targeted questioning that maximizes student learning.
 - Many classes used questioning techniques as their strategy for differentiating instruction and others used small group instruction. However, there is no use of data to ensure multiple entry points, extensions and supports for all learners. Some students are engaged in their learning especially in their vocational classes. However, student work products do not exemplify a high level of rigor to prepare students for rigorous assessments.
- Develop coherence and alignment in the school's curriculum to promote rigor and ensure that all students make progress in their learning.
 - The office of curriculum and instruction has aligned the curriculum to State standards and created pacing calendars. Some classes include higher order thinking skills and rigorous instruction in their lessons, but this is not an embedded practice. The school has revamped the curriculum and created new courses to prepare students for State assessments using the project-based learning approach. However, there is little evidence that student work is rigorous enough to ensure that it is used effectively school-wide.
- Refine a system that monitors teaching practice to improve instruction.
 - Even though, the principal has designed a system for providing feedback to teachers, many lessons did not demonstrate knowledge of rigorous activities and student engagement.
 - Even though, the office of curriculum and instruction provides a range of supports to teachers, there is no differentiated support for teachers based on their specific needs.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Grace Dodge Career and Technical High School	△	▶	✓	+
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