



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

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Monroe Academy for the Visual Arts and Design

**High School 692
132 Boynton Avenue
Bronx
NY 10472**

Principal: Richard J. Massel

Dates of review: November 16 – 17, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Joel T. DiBartolomeo

Part 1: The school context

Monroe Academy for Visual Arts and Design is a high school with 469 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 21% Black, 77% Hispanic and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 29% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 77.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The principal of Monroe Academy for Visual Arts and Design creates a clear vision for school improvement that is shared by the whole staff. In addition, school plans and goals are set collaboratively, contributing to a high degree of teacher commitment to them. However, school goals and plans are not communicated to parents, who are not involved consistently in decisions related to the growth of the school. The school's user-friendly database helps teachers working in teams to identify sub-groups and individual students not meeting with success, and to pinpoint those areas of the curriculum not being mastered. In addition, this data management system allows for easy tracking of students and enables teachers to identify those students needing interventions, which include social and emotional responses as well as academic supports. While student expectations are established in the school's curriculum, student-level data or information about the college admissions process are not regularly communicated to parents who, therefore, cannot adequately support their children's learning or aspirations.

Teachers and students benefit from the safe environment they have established together. Teacher teams meet regularly and utilize a variety of protocols using data to identify the impact of instructional strategies and to refine their assessment strategies. They review student work to look closely at the conditions of learning in which it took shape. Students are often included in these meetings as subjects and participants, which results in their taking greater responsibility for the learning process and subsequent academic success. Teachers are afforded the discretion to make decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment. However, data is used sporadically to ascertain the effectiveness of these decisions, which means that judgments about the impact of these decisions are not always precise.

There are good plans in place for addressing the school's identified priorities such as increasing the graduation, Regent's examination passing and attendance rates. At regular intervals, student progress is analyzed and progress towards yearly targets is measured. The result is that teachers revise their curriculum maps and make new provisions for extra support or enrichment each year. However, while this activity includes the routine review of student grades, it does not include the monitoring of student mastery of standards and skills, making the tracking of student learning inexact. In addition, teachers do not provide sufficiently differentiated instructional strategies to build on what they already know. Support for individual students is therefore not consistent across classrooms and as a result student progress is delayed. Furthermore, the variety of classroom activities is limited and this has the effect of precluding students being able to access one another or their teachers to provide resources that might help them.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has developed a unique data tool that captures key student data sources and allows the school, teams and individual teachers to make instructional and organizational decisions efficiently.
 - Teams use the school's database to identify sub-groups and individual students who are not progressing within their cohort, resulting in curriculum modifications that address those areas not being mastered and enrollment in Regents' preparation classes.
 - Teachers use the school's database to track student performance over the course of the school year resulting in early identification of students in need of extra support.
- School goals and plans are informed by a collaborative, rigorous interrogation of the data that results in school improvement efforts that are strategic and focused.
 - The school's improvement plans identify student sub-groups whose performance is below the overall school success rates and provide goals and plans to accelerate their learning.
 - Teachers can state clearly the school's goals and the data that led to their formation and use this information when meeting to review student progress.
- A large majority of teachers are engaged in professional learning communities that utilize a set of inquiry-based protocols to guide their discussions.
 - Teachers engage in professional learning activities three times a week, during which they examine student work to determine how to adapt instruction to build on what students are able to do. They also have created a series of writing prompts that elicit from students a measure of their writing ability in targeted areas for improvement.
 - Team meetings are used to identify students needing extra support and to identify the root causes of their lack of progress by connecting student learning to the teaching strategies or curriculum that helped produce it.
- The school's approach to building its capacity for improvement includes empowering teachers to discuss their practice, refine instructional strategies, and pose questions about the use of data.
 - Teacher teams use planning time to make decisions about what to teach and how to teach it for the English language learners to which they are assigned, permitting a greater degree of alignment of curriculum and instruction with the needs of students.
 - Teachers benefit from training that enables them to lead professional discussions and to facilitate the processes that guide their meetings, which has resulted in more productive meetings and more rigorous professional dialogue.

- Teachers meet with students and their parents when social and emotional issues interfere with learning, resulting in targeted support from school-based counselors and social workers.
 - In an effort to meet its goals for graduation and attendance, parents meet with school leaders, teachers, and guidance personnel to explore the issues that need tackling and the range of opportunities that can be provided for intervention and support .
 - Intervention strategies include those that address the social and emotional needs of adolescents, such as opportunities to reflect on behavior and guidance in problem-solving students' personal issues.
- The school uses both quantitative and qualitative data to make adjustments in its curriculum, instructional practices and scheduling decisions.
 - Student outcomes are reviewed at the conclusion of each marking period to determine progress towards yearly goals resulting in revisions to curriculum maps, classroom assignments, and intervention or enrichment strategies.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that teachers employ teaching strategies and classroom routines that are differentiated to provide multiple levels of engagement with content areas and opportunities of student participation in learning.
 - Classroom strategies provide students with little access to their higher ability peers or teachers during the course of their lessons resulting in limited opportunities to seek feedback or clarification.
 - Lessons are not always designed to optimize student learning, resulting in student work that is not always meaningful or that meets State standards.
- Ensure that the results of student assessments are communicated to parents so that they can track and assist with their progress in achieving their learning goals.
 - Parents are not provided the results of interim assessments and, as a result, are limited in their capacity to provide at-home support or advocacy for their children.
 - Teachers track the progress of individual students but information about the outcomes of tracking, for example the need for intervention or support, are not fully discussed with parents.
- Ensure that families receive information about the school's expectations, its plans, graduation requirements and college admissions so that they can support their children's post secondary aspirations.
 - Parents do not receive sufficient information about the college admission process and as a result are unable to assist their children in securing post-secondary education.
 - Parents are not sufficiently or consistently involved in the development of plans for the growth of the school, as the school's plans are not made available to them.

- Ensure consistency in measuring progress towards school and team interim goals so that definitive judgments about the impact of improvement plans can be secured.
 - The action plans used by school and teacher teams do not contain interim checkpoints to enable them to make judgments about overall progress at regular intervals.
 - The school has identified key strategies for improvement, but these are not staged and phased within the context of a clear plan for their development.

School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Monroe Academy for the Visual Arts and Design	△	▶	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: 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 and deliver rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, 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 its 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