



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

FDNY High School for Fire and Life Safety

High School K502

**400 Pennsylvania Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: James Anderson

**Dates of review: May 16 – 17, 2011
Lead Reviewer: Michael L. Schurek**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The FDNY High School for Fire and Life Safety is a high school with 400 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 77% Black, 21% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 80% of the students enrolled and girls account for 20%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 82.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Teachers work in collaborative teams to share good practice, create assessments, and develop tools to successfully analyze data and plan curriculum and instruction.
 - Teachers collaboratively utilize backward planning to design common assessments in all subject areas that are administered during each of the six marking periods. This data is combined with mock Regents results and smaller interim assessments and analyzed to adjust curriculum and instruction with an emphasis on writing across curricula, resulting in dramatically stronger English Regents performance rates.
 - Teacher teams conduct an item analysis each marking period to look for patterns in student responses that are used to develop target areas of low performance. Action plans are created to remediate identified areas of improvement that include re-teaching days to meet the smaller groups and individual needs of students. This practice has become the core of the school's instructional belief system and is used to differentiate instruction on a daily basis. Consequently, teachers are more aware of what students need to graduate. As a result, 33 out of 36 possible holdover students are currently on track to graduate, indicating that the school is on target to meet Annual Yearly Progress shortcomings.
- Leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions to support improvements in teaching and learning.
 - In order to increase graduation, credit accumulation and Regents pass rates and achieve long range goals of preparing students for both Fire Department careers and college, holiday courses, Saturday school and teacher tutoring have been initiated. These organizational decisions facilitate increasing credit accumulation rates.
 - Teachers are organized into cohort teams that meet two days per week in two different settings, one for grade level and one for departments. Grade level teams, including guidance personnel, focus on the lowest third populations in each cohort and mentor students to provide social, emotional and family assistance to improve academic outcomes. The department teams conduct inquiry, analyze student work and plan re-teaching opportunities together. This structure allows every teacher to participate in setting data-based achievement goals for their students.
- The principal has created a learning community that is well focused on student outcomes with a vision to continue to accelerate learning.
 - School action plans and goals align with the school's beliefs that all students can use emergency medical and firefighting studies to develop high-level literacy, math, science and problem-solving skills needed in the workplace and further education. As a result, the number of students

graduating with acceptance into the New York City Fire Department Emergency Medical Technician Academy increases yearly.

- School constituents conduct effective goal setting and action planning by analyzing Automate the Schools data, scholarship reports, previous Quality Review improvement areas, Regents scores, teacher-made assessments, credit trackers, attendance, safety/security data and Progress Report data to identify trends and set goals to ensure accelerated student learning. This process motivates students and families to self-assess credit accumulation progress and online grading while teachers consistently adjust curricula through ongoing collaboration, generating solid community support.
- Effective student support services and partnerships provide students with a wide range of opportunities to grow academically and socially.
 - The school celebrates student success and improvement through numerous public display charts, announcements, special dinners and luncheons and town hall meetings. Teachers have participated in Respect for All training and behavior management workshops to improve the classroom learning environment. Students with 25 to 75 absences last year were identified early this year to participate in the school's attendance improvement plan. These efforts have enabled the targeted students' average attendance to move from 34% to 75% so far this year.
 - This school partners with the New York City Fire Department to offer real-world learning experiences by utilizing Fire Department personnel and equipment to train students in all aspects of firefighting, including emergency medical procedures. As a result, students who graduate as certified emergency medical technicians can be hired as Emergency Medical Technicians by the New York City Fire Department.
- Staff conveys high expectations to students and parents thus impacting positively on student achievement.
 - Strategically-placed television monitors display graduation requirements in close proximity to exhibits containing graduation credit trackers lists, honor and merit rolls, and Good-to-Go college readiness information. The school's college access team generates student interest in attending college through college visitations and presentations that begin in ninth grade, contributing to increased college acceptance rates.
 - The school uses its School Leadership Team, Parent Teacher Association and the Association Council leaders to seek parental input through surveys that are used to make school decisions. Parents conduct fundraising to help the school meet goals and volunteer their time in this effort. For instance, parent volunteers have made phone calls on behalf of the school, thereby increasing the school's communication rating on the Learning Environment Survey.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase academic rigor by designing stimulating academic tasks aligned to key standards in all subjects that utilize exemplars to model expectations and enable students to refine their work until standards are met.
 - While the school emphasizes writing as a key standard and aligns curriculum maps to State standards utilizing backward planning, there is limited evidence of students completing projects requiring higher order thinking skills that are engaging to learners on all levels. As a result, only 25% of students claim that they have completed research-based projects five or more times during the year on the Learning Environment Survey.
- Expand differentiation practices by varying the methods of instruction, lesson content and student work products across curricula to guarantee multiple entry points and challenge students on all ability levels.
 - Most teachers utilize the workshop model for lesson design and follow similar lesson agenda routines, however, differentiation practices do not typically offer multiple entry points and planning strategies often lead to uneven levels of student engagement. These shortcomings contribute to the school's inability to meet Adequate Yearly Progress in English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- Broaden the use of the school's observation tools to include an analysis of student work products and data to provide relevant feedback to teachers and ensure their continued professional growth.
 - While instructional coherence is supported by the majority of faculty, school leaders do not provide feedback to teachers that includes an analysis of student data and student work products. This omission limits the school's ability to provide a wide enough range of support to teachers to ensure accelerated student outcomes.
- Extend the practice of providing consistent feedback to students with detailed reasons for their success and clear next steps for improvement based on specific rubrics to help them set and achieve their goals.
 - The school uses online grading, progress reports, and case conferencing to enable students and families to understand progress and next steps. While rubrics are used by many teachers, it is not embedded practice for teachers to indicate next steps for students to improve work quality and not all students use rubrics to self-assess their work.
- Refine action planning by linking interim goals to specific projected benchmark gains at indicated intervals so that school, team and teacher action plans can be monitored to expedite revisions and maximize impact.
 - School action plans list intervals and instruments of periodic review, but do not include projected gains for each interim measure of progress. The lack of these structures hampers the implementation of timely adjustments to improve outcomes and limits the school's ability to align planning from one year to the next.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: FDNY High School for Fire and Life Safety 19K502	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?				X
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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		

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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		

Quality Review Scoring Key

UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed
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