



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

School of the Future

Middle-High School 413

127 East 22nd Street

New York

NY 10010

Principal: Stacy Goldstein

Dates of review: November 22 - 23, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Elaine Gorman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

School of the Future is a middle-high school with 680 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 20% Black, 26% Hispanic, 34% White, and 18% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 95.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The highly focused instructional leadership team and committed staff make intentional decisions regarding embedding key content and skills into rigorous spiraled curricula, resulting in academic challenge for all students.
 - Vertical teams of teachers create a coherent, spiraled curriculum of key content and skills informed by the principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools, State standards, and the recently introduced Common Core Standards. Programming for humanities for grades 6-9 develops content connections across subjects as demonstrated in written work and presentations. This all leads to a well-articulated curriculum, including habits of mind that allow students to skillfully solve problems and understand what they are learning and why it is important.
 - Units of study follow a backwards-mapping protocol from grade 12, with a series of differentiated assessments based on essential questions, including on-demand tasks. Learning is demonstrated during middle school roundtables and high school exhibitions that increase with mastery. Students' best describe results, "Classes are designed to make you think deeply." "Exhibitions are challenging, understanding is valued." Parents added, "This is three-dimensional learning."
- Grounded by well-developed beliefs about student learning, strategies are differentiated and engaging, evidenced by high-level discourse and student work products throughout classrooms.
 - The school uses the 'Assessment Driven Instruction Cycle' as a grounding document to reclarify and synthesize the connections between diagnostic and formative assessments, differentiation, and demonstration of mastery. Differentiation based on assessment is consistent throughout the vast majority of classrooms. Programs, such as open honors and reading extensions (REACH), leads to clear teaching points, planned groups of self-directed students highly engaged in thoughtful conversation, and the construction of projects and written work, all including challenge problems.
 - Born from the school's pillars of successful students, the teaching toolkit offers teachers techniques to develop high-level questioning, engagement through reading, thinking, writing, and differentiation. These techniques, along with teachers' written observations of student understanding, are embedded as evidenced in most classrooms by robust engagement and work products, as well as student collaboration, reflection, and growing independence.
- Organizational decisions made by the school community are informed by ongoing analysis of student learning and social-emotional needs thus creating a responsive environment that holds itself collectively accountable.
 - Strategic budgeting decisions are comprehensive and support the school's short- and long-term goals, including a teacher serving English language learners, a highly refined list of books, teacher development, technology, per-session time to assist students with exhibitions, and an extra parent/teacher night. Impact is seen in the use of rich and differentiation of classroom libraries and the development of a specialized online reporting system of student work.

- Students are thoughtfully matched with staff members, who remain a significant adult over time and conduit to grade-level team members, who collectively identify and check-in on targeted students and collaborate on grade issues. Small class sizes, purposeful hiring of coaches, and strategic use of team teaching, leads to consistently high level of performance on Progress Reports, including significant extra credit for special populations, as well as thorough action plans for areas of improvement.
- A refined system of assessments, clearly aligned to key standards and skills, provides a comprehensive view of learning needs for students and groups of students, informing decision making at the classroom and school level.
 - Exceptional coherence exists in curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the school. Focus remains on demonstration of content and skill mastery, and habits of mind. Teams of teachers design their own assessments, administered five times a year, supported by differentiated and on-demand tasks. Analysis of results indicates that high school students are meeting the increasing expectations for high-level content exhibitions as measured by rich rubrics. While middle school students demonstrate great sophistication in oral and written work, the school's response to recent State test scores is already changing the level of scaffolding in classrooms. Standards-based grading completes the cycle allowing greater understanding for families and informs student goal setting.
- A robust theory of action underpins a cohesive system of goal setting and action planning for staff and students, binding the community in holding each other to high standards in the demonstration of learning.
 - The school community lives its belief that in a caring environment students must actively participate in learning to develop critical minds and demonstrate deep understanding. Using multiple sources for vigorous analysis, goal setting and action planning are purposeful, aligned, and leads to almost 100% of the student body entering college.
 - Parents, students, and teachers easily discuss the school goals and action steps. Parents say, "The school seeks input, listens, and makes strategic decisions so each child is college ready." "Children meet high standards, are challenged and provide evidence, and complete community service". Goal setting is well understood by students who talk about a "community that challenges you and helps each other." Teacher goals are explicitly linked to school goals resulting in specific and ongoing conversations between administrators and peers. Impact is evident in the Learning Environment Survey where nearly 90% agree there are pervasive high expectations.
- Through the lens of a well-supported instructional focus and analysis of student learning, the administration, coaches, and peers, offer differentiated support and actionable feedback, building teacher capacity.
 - Teacher goals are specifically aligned to school goals and rest on a sustained philosophy of "student as worker, teacher as coach". Observational expectations and a teaching toolkit support the school's instructional focus of students constructing meaning and demonstrating mastery. Recognizing they are continual learners, teachers value the opportunity to participate in varied and differentiated activities via coaching, workshops, visitations, lesson study, and peer review, that supports their goals, as does the additional assistance to new teachers to the school. Formal and informal observations by school leaders are

precise in aligning strengths and next steps to goals resulting in building capacity as measured by formal check-ins that include a review of student work and outcomes.

- Parallel with an analysis of the Common Core Standards, the school is revising its curriculum and school-developed assessments, in order to deepen coherence between what is taught and how it is taught.
 - Department teams are unpacking Common Core Standards and simultaneously modifying curriculum and school-designed assessment rubrics to continually enrich both the level of instruction and student mastery toward college readiness. This substantial work is impacting instructional practice and student writing.
 - In receipt of Title I funds for the first time, the school analyzed reading scores for eligible students, leading to enhancements in reading experiences for this school-specific subgroup. The principal's recognition that students' learning needed to include Common Core standards was a shift for staff, and is supported by the use of Title I funds for professional development by Teachers' College staff. The effective implementation is already furthering advanced reading strategies across content.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop aggregate data tools for a macro view at school and team levels to enrich preciseness of pattern analysis for decision-making.
 - Currently school leaders and teacher teams thoughtfully use a range of well-developed tools to analyze and respond to trends in performance at all levels. Recognizing a need for a broader view of all data, leaders are looking at how to build on the current work of the special education department and identify methods at other schools as promising practices. However, the school does not yet have methodology to gain a macro view of aggregate data, thus making the excellent work occurring by leaders and teams time consuming and less precise.
- Deepen databased goal setting by ensuring that interim benchmarks *are* delineated and inform ongoing differentiated supports for students.
 - At this time, the school is a model of goal setting for staff and students with defined differentiated next steps. There are substantial models of interim goals throughout the school, but as the school leaders identified, they do not yet have a consistency of interim goals with delineated benchmarks. Therefore, the driving effort to have all students accelerate their learning is more difficult to gauge and achieve.
- Build on models of well-established professional collaborations by employing robust inquiry to strategically analyze and respond to student assessments.
 - Distributed leadership is embedded in reflective teacher collaborations engaging all teachers by grade level and content. There are exemplars of precise analysis that leads to substantial changes in classroom practice and student work. However, this level of practice is not consistent in all teams making decisions vulnerable to supposition without a means to evaluate.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: School of the Future	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