



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**Wadleigh Secondary School for the Performing  
and Visual Arts**

**Middle-High School M415**

**215 West 114 Street  
New York  
NY 10026**

**Principal: Herma Hall**

**Dates of review: December 16 - 17, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Elaine Gorman**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

Wadleigh Secondary School for the Performing and Visual Arts is a middle-high school with 532 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 64% Black, 33% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Native American, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 43% of the students enrolled and girls account for 57%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 77.7%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- A committed staff consistently plan lessons that build opportunities for discussion and writing leading to good levels of student engagement in group activities and written products.
  - School leadership provide training and staff regularly adhere to the Principles of Learning, particularly “learner as apprentice” in order to provide students with the opportunity to actively engage and to reflect on their own learning. These practices produce good consistency across classrooms in delivery of instruction as students collaborate in pairs and demonstrate their understanding of the work verbally and in writing.
  - Student writing as a priority in most classrooms incorporates self- and peer- review against thoughtful rubrics. While there is recognition that writing is an area for continuous work across content, students’ siblings who are graduates of the school, reported they “were well prepared for college.”
- The sequencing of coursework and programming of students is intentional and allows students to advance in both the arts and accelerated academic courses.
  - Thoughtful use of budget and time enables the school to maintain a sequence of visual and performing arts experiences for students, as well as a full academic program. Careful planning allows this small school to offer a range of preparatory and advanced placement courses, meeting the needs of a diverse population of students.
  - Leaders take full advantage of the secondary school experience by programming Regents coursework beginning in 8<sup>th</sup> grade in order to afford students early completion of required coursework and exams. Course sequencing and opportunities for early Regents’ testing has led to a high weighted Regents’ diploma percentage in comparison to the school’s peer group as evidenced on the school’s Progress Report.
- The majority of staff support a common instructional focus, underpinned by the Principles of Learning, and seek to improve their practice through peer collaborations and professional development opportunities.
  - Principles of Learning, has evolved over the past few years as a common instructional focus for staff. Teachers meet informally and formally, using this as a framework, to collaborate on best practices and look at results of their work to establish continuity of pacing and, creating opportunities for student experiential learning. Additionally, this is supporting the beginning of grade 8 teamwork across content areas.
  - A representative group of teachers actively participates in the network’s Common Core Standards work group, while other teachers receive training to teach advanced placement courses or Achievement Via Individual Determination (AVID). While some trainings are provided to the entire staff, specialized training, followed by team collaboration, allows for multiple instructional strategies and course options to be incorporated by the school.

- Parents are appreciative of ongoing communications about their children’s academic progress, which they feel connects them to the school and facilitates their children’s learning.
  - Parent leaders, several of whom are alumni, are highly appreciative of the “family” environment created by the school staff, and the principal’s open door policy that invites input from families. Parents indicate that from their first contact with the school, college is the school’s expectation for their children. As a result of the focus on academics and the arts, a number of parents send more than one child to the school.
  - Although parents do not use ARIS Parent Link in large number, frequent progress reports and teacher contact provides parents with timely communications and opportunity to collaborate on the needs of their children. Of the 37% of parents who responded to the Learning Environment Survey, 97% indicated that they had opportunities to be involved in their children’s education.
- The school develops partnerships to provide both staff development and additional supports for students, leading to age appropriate youth development.
  - In response to observations in classrooms and increased incidents of student misbehavior, professional development in Life Space Crisis Intervention and Guided Discipline is provided for all staff. These opportunities, followed by coaching for teachers in these principles, have resulted in good improvement in all levels of misconduct and substantial reduction in principal and superintendent suspensions.
  - The Apollo Theatre, Joyce Theatre Foundation, the Metropolitan Museum, the Beacon 21<sup>st</sup> Century program, and College for Every Student are just a few of the partnerships supporting Wadleigh students in academic and social development through tutoring, leadership opportunities and activities to expand learning for those who have met basic standards. The school media center also sponsors an array of guest speakers from the arts, government, and community resources to expose students to careers and to make real the lessons learned in class. This active connection to the community and mentorship of experts in their given fields, are positively impacting the development of students’ skills.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Building on current curricula, use multiple sources of data to identify rigorous habits and tasks to be included into the curricula so that all students are suitably challenged.
  - Although teachers have worked together to select units of study and develop pacing calendars, current curriculum documents do not consistently articulate how major topics should be taught or assessed, or how tasks are to be differentiated, limiting rigor and implementation of higher order skills suitable for all learners.
  - While some examples of content and skill development across grades and subject areas exist, collaborations by teachers are more informal than planned, and the lack of documentation for this work limits replication. As a result, these practices are neither embedded nor assessed, and thus hinder an understanding of how these models are impacting student understanding and work products.
- Further develop common assessments to measure the effectiveness of instructional practices relative to the needs of students.

- Plans by content teams are focused on developing common assessments and utilizing Filemaker data-organizing software next semester. Although a teacher-made spreadsheet is currently serving as a model for viewing data, at this time, the school does not sufficiently analyze instructional practices on student outcomes. Without a clearer understanding of student needs and interim measures, the results of current efforts to differentiate instruction in order to improve student outcomes are greatly limited.
- Develop long and short-term goals with interim benchmarks that drive school effort at all levels to accelerate student learning.
  - Currently, there is an understanding of the school's mission, but a long-term plan is not articulated. Additionally, short-term goals are not consistently written into all documents, and all written goals do not yet have interim benchmarks by which to measure progress, nor are they revised throughout the year. Without clear goals and benchmarks at the school, team, and classroom levels, action planning does not have deep connections to the data to accelerate student learning.
- Deepen professional collaborations and employ inquiry to more accurately respond to fluctuations in student outcomes.
  - While all teachers participate in regularly scheduled professional collaborations and ARIS inquiry spaces to share their work with each other, most do not use an inquiry approach around good data analysis, thus limiting the assessment of the impact of their work on student achievement.
  - Currently, the insufficient analysis of the fluctuations of student outcomes by teacher teams, on State exams, credit earning, and student work, hinders their preciseness in planning.
- Develop systems to measure progress toward interim goals at school and student levels in order monitor and revise plans effectively in response to in-depth analysis.
  - The school does not yet have sufficient systems for measuring progress nor articulated interim goals. Although the school has plans to implement new systems next semester, current processes limit mid-course corrections, leading to continued unanticipated changes in student results.
  - Individually, most teachers use various processes for measuring student progress towards attaining course-specific goals. In response, additional assistance is provided to students. However, systems for in-depth analysis of data at the classroom and team levels, are not yet fully developed, thus making, revision of plans more reactive than proactive, vulnerable to assumption, and not well focused on improving instructional practices.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Wadleigh Secondary School for Performing and Visual Arts</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		<b>X</b>		
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?		<b>X</b>		
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			<b>X</b>	

<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>					
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			<b>X</b>				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?			<b>X</b>				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		<b>X</b>					
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>