



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Edward A. Reynolds West Side High School

High School 505

140 West 102 Street

New York

NY 10025

Principal: Jean McTavish

Dates of review: May 9 - 10, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Catherine M. Powis

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Edward A. Reynolds West Side High School is a transfer school with 547 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 37% Black, 61% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 20% 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 64.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- All stakeholders agree that the school is a respectful, nurturing environment which enables students to receive a good level of support in their personal and academic development.
 - Students are eager to share that teachers “...really care about us here and really do give us a second chance...” to reach their full potential. Staff and students are on a first name basis and students feel that they are treated as adults by having a voice in the classroom. One student shared that she is able to discuss with teachers her responsibilities at home and at work and how to balance them with the academic expectations. The daily family group period provides a venue where family group advisors lend targeted assistance to their students based on achievement data and practice team-building and behavior protocols with them. This intensive social-emotional and academic support results in a significantly low suspension rate and advances in the personal and academic growth of students.
- School leaders and faculty ensure that both students and families are well informed of the expectations that the school sets so that all learners make significant progress.
 - Parents unanimously praise the principal for knowing what’s best for their children. Their praise extends to the parent coordinator who is exceptional in maintaining a constant line of communication. As one parent shared, “She made us feel like it was a family reunion when my son first transferred to this school.” In addition to workshops and adult education evening classes, the bulk of parent involvement includes individual conferences with parents consistently communicating the school’s high expectations for their children to reach the goal of graduation. Additionally, family group teachers work diligently with both parents and students to reengage them, by calling and emailing updates on attendance, lateness, behavior, and progress in coursework. Parents are also actively encouraged to share relevant information about their child with staff to ensure that they are integral part of the decisions in meeting their child’s needs. As a result of these focused partnerships between the school and families, the drop-out rate decreased significantly this year and more students are on track for credit accumulation.
- Improvements in learning are supported by informed organizational decisions across aspects of the school in order to support improvements in learning.
 - The principal aggressively sought and was successful in encumbering a grant that provides an in-school academic support program for struggling students who have a desire to attend college and are willing to work hard. Both students and a team of teachers are carefully selected to participate in a block program schedule offering extended time to accomplish content course requirements through a rigorous curriculum. Teachers attend on-going professional development that commenced over the summer to launch the program in September. The program is successfully impacting both student progress, as evidenced by increased credit accumulation for these students, and increasing best practices in classrooms thus impacting on closing the achievement gap.

- All teachers provide intensive personal and academic support for students through a Family Group period four days per week. In this assignment teachers assume an advisory role by taking responsibility of small groups of students to cultivate good personal habits and academic goal-setting. Teachers collaborate frequently on how best to keep students on track emotionally and academically for success in achieving graduation. As a result the six year graduation rate has increased by 5.5% over last year.
- Assessment practices in classrooms and at the teacher team level provide ongoing identification of student learning needs in order to improve student outcomes.
 - Students are assessed every three weeks and graded every six weeks through six cycles of performance. Content area teams design final exams administered every six weeks as progress indicators toward course requirements and a way to assess the effectiveness of their instructional decisions. Class summary sheets are updated at the end of each cycle identifying groups of students to target for intervention. Furthermore, ongoing tests, conferences, and short-term projects help provide a clearer picture of student needs. In turn, teachers provide immediate, differentiated intervention during lunch and after-school tutoring that results in improved course pass rates.
- All stakeholders share a commitment to school-level achievement goals and expectations for accelerating learning.
 - School leaders and faculty carefully assess attendance, drop-out rate, credit accumulation, Regents passing rates, and graduation rate each quarter. This informs the school's annual and interim goals and action plans that are shared with families as well as students at School Leadership Team (SLT) meetings. As a result, this and a continued dialogue during daily morning meeting with faculty ensure a broad base of support for the school's pathway to success for all learners.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop curriculum that challenges students and incorporates cognitively demanding skills through more rigorous academic tasks and activities to ensure gains in student achievement.
 - Curriculum maps used in pre-Regents and Regents coursework are driven by State standards. As an alternative school for several overage students one-term courses offer accelerated preparation for Regents exams, as an alternative to having to repeat a full year of coursework. However, several curriculum maps and classroom activities and tasks are not matched to essential questions needed to emphasize rigorous habits and higher order thinking nor do they prioritize specific standards to address the needs of specific student subgroups. Consequently, special education students are not consistently challenged and their ability to make sufficient progress is hampered.
- Improve teaching practices that provide differentiated approaches to learning so that all lessons are sufficiently challenging and elicit higher order thinking that leads to improvements in student progress.
 - The use of data to inform lesson planning with an emphasis on differentiated approaches is not uniformly practiced. Some lessons are conducted to include a

- mini-lesson followed by group activities. However, most activities are generic and students do not always understand the intended outcomes of the work. As a result, not all lessons enable students to learn new content without being hampered by their skill deficits. Consequently, some students do not make sufficient progress in acquiring new knowledge, skills, and understanding. This impedes gains in student achievement.
- There is limited student work celebrated and on display in the classrooms. In the majority of classrooms students were asked to complete tasks that required little or no cognitive rigor. For example, in one class English language learners were struggling to piece ten or more sentence strips together to create an essay and note its organization. As a result, student engagement and participation was highly uneven, and student work products do not reflect depth of thought.
 - Ensure consistency in teacher pedagogy through explicit feedback by school leaders with clear next steps to achieve school-wide instructional goals.
 - Although school-wide goals define professional development in most of their action plans, there is a lack of coherence in the feedback from school leaders extended to teachers in their written observation reports. This inhibits consistency from classroom to classroom in how teachers can improve their practice in identified areas such as differentiating instruction, and instructional alignment to school-wide goals. Consequently, improved pedagogy is hampered.
 - Collaborative Action Research (CAR) is used to help teachers identify best practices for groups of students in order to incorporate these strategies into their lesson plans. Additionally, one of the school's goals this year is to survey teachers and provide differentiated professional development based on the Santa Cruz Teaching Standards. However, these practices are still developing and impact has not yet reached all classrooms to improve teacher practice.
 - Establish a structure for the systematic evaluation of team effectiveness and capacity -building with a lens on modifying policies and practices that ensure coherence across classrooms.
 - Assistant principals serve as team facilitators to support and monitor the work of the teams. However, school leaders have not yet finalized benchmarks for the evaluation of inquiry work throughout the year. Additionally, an explicit data-informed evaluation of the effectiveness other capacity-building structures such as CAR and plans for differentiated support is not yet consistent. As a result, there is no clear indication of necessary modifications in order to achieve school-wide goals.
 - Implement a yearlong professional development plan with long-term impact tightly aligned to school-wide goals that ensures improved teacher practices and student outcomes.
 - Through a grant a cohort of teachers is receiving yearlong professional development with a focus on increased student engagement and accountable talk, differentiated approaches to instruction coupled to thought-provoking tasks and activities. Hired consultants lend support for adult learning through participation in department, inquiry, and faculty meetings. Planning for differentiated support to teachers by utilizing the Santa Cruz Professional Teaching Standards is developing. Currently there is no cohesive plan for

professional development that links these initiatives together and supports overall school goals. As a result, not all students benefit from accelerated learning outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Edward A. Reynolds West Side High School	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
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