

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

High School of Graphic Communication Arts

**High School 625
439 West 49th Street
New York
NY 10019**

Principal: Jerod Resnick

Dates of review: October 19 – 21, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Michael L. Schurek

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The High School for Graphic Arts Communication is a high school with 1820 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 33% Black, 61% Hispanic, 2% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 75.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and staff work as a unified team to create a calm and respectful environment where learning can take place and students feel supported.
 - In spite of the school's large population, most students feel supported in their academic endeavors and are well known by multiple adults in the building. Teachers, administrators and guidance counselors collaborate through the school's four academies to ensure that all students can excel academically by regularly discussing individual students' needs and designing interventions such as tutoring and attendance improvement plans to provide necessary supports to them and their families.
 - Students display a strong desire to succeed and appreciate their abilities to influence school-level decisions through student government and the open-door policy of the principal and administration. As a result of student input, a recent decision to ban outside food from the school for sanitary reasons has been negotiated to allow food into the building with the stipulation that it can only be consumed in the cafeteria.
- The school's systems and partnerships support the majority of students and their families in continual learning and promote students' personal growth.
 - The school enjoys numerous partnerships with community based organizations that support social-emotional well-being by providing in-depth child/youth assistance that offers services to address counseling, immigration and housing needs. In addition, career-based organizations enable the career themed education students to experience real world learning opportunities through the school's extensive work study program. As a result, the school maintains a positive and respectful atmosphere in which most students and their families feel well supported.
 - Teachers receive professional development regarding child abuse reporting procedures, the school discipline code, behavior plan creation and conflict resolution to support the school's safe environment. In addition, the school's extensive schedule of academy and department meetings allows continued teacher support in these areas during the year through one-on-one interaction with assistant principals and colleagues.
- Teachers are beginning to work effectively in collaborative teams to share good practice, develop tools to analyze data and plan instruction.
 - Teachers meet outside of their academies in department teams to examine classroom assessments such as exit slips and item analyses to identify problem areas and measure the effectiveness of their practices. For instance, the social studies department recently identified a problem with students understanding the Supreme Court. As a result of this discovery, teachers employ specialized vocabulary preparation and utilize abstract presentation to build student comprehension in this area.
 - Teachers are trained in the use of Aris and regularly supplement summative data by examining Periodic Assessment outcomes resulting in a

school wide focus to improve students' abilities to draw conclusions in all subject areas.

- Staff conveys high expectations to students and parents thus impacting positively on student achievement.
 - Academy assemblies, freshman orientation activities and career themed education work internships emphasize the school's college-for-all focus. High expectations are consistently communicated by all staff and include post-secondary opportunities through advanced placement courses offered at local colleges enabling 50% of graduates to attend post-secondary programs.
 - Due to the fact that students who attend this school come from every district in New York City, the school conducts parent teacher association meetings regularly at separate north and south locations to provide extra opportunity for participation resulting in increased familial involvement.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop rigorous and coherent curricula based on State standards that is consistent across the school and meets the needs of a variety of learners.
 - The school does not disaggregate data at this time for English language learners, special education students and lowest third achievers thereby making efforts to emphasize key standards inconsistent.
 - In addition, most classroom activities require all students to complete the same academic tasks utilizing the same materials and do not reflect planning designed to connect with a wide range of learners.
- Expand differentiation practices to ensure that all lessons adjust content materials and work products based on data to meet all student needs.
 - While administrators communicate a vision of student-centered classrooms utilizing the workshop model, most classrooms conduct teacher-directed lessons, failing to be reflective of a school wide belief for successful student learning.
 - The school has developed a Grading for Success program that provides unsuccessful students with options to revise work using alternative assessments; however, progress regarding differentiation across subjects and grades to other students is limited. A model classroom in one subject area for teacher observation has been established, but most classrooms display teaching strategies and routines that are generic and undifferentiated hampering opportunities for individual student progress.
- Extend the use of the school's observation tool to encourage teachers to reflect on their practice and professional growth to establish a coherent school culture.
 - Administrators and teachers have just begun to utilize a Quality Review classroom observation template to conduct observations and group walkthroughs. In addition, the school has adopted a blackboard configuration template requiring that an aim, learning objective, "Do Now"

activity and homework assignment be displayed and all classrooms arrange students into groups. While all of these practices are theoretically sound, they have not established instructional coherence because in most classrooms student groups are not utilized to differentiate instruction.

- The academy structure enables teachers to discuss professional development ideas when they share best practices and conduct group walkthroughs during common planning time, however, new teachers receive only mandated mentoring from a UFT provider therefore most teachers are not exposed to targeted professional development.
- Evaluate progress towards defined goals for all strategic decisions through interim checks of measurable targets to support adjustments and coherence.
 - Due to low Social Studies Regents' pass rates, the school adjusted the curriculum for ninth graders by having them take American History in place of Global History to make an easier transition for students based on the fact that they just completed United States history in middle school. While reasons for this decision are sound, a system to check progress against data-driven objectives has not been established thereby missing opportunities to measure effectiveness and adjust practices along the way.
 - The school utilizes many funding sources such as federal funding, grant money and community based providers to align its use of resources with school goals; however, structures to evaluate effectiveness are sporadic and rely heavily on teacher surveys rather than the achievement of regularly measured established goals.
- Establish the practice of using data to set differentiated learning goals in all subjects for students needing support to target needs and raise outcomes.
 - Teachers in most classes do not set subject learning goals for individual students or groups of students in need of additional support thereby missing opportunities to track progress and adjust practices to meet student needs. In addition, teacher teams formulate undifferentiated goals for students in their cohort, missing opportunities to accelerate their instruction. As a result, progress report statistics indicate that the lowest third students currently average over 12% less credits earned per year when compared to higher achieving peers.
- Refine action planning by linking interim goals to targeted benchmarks at specific intervals to ensure that school, team and teacher action plans can be monitored to expedite revisions and maximize impact along the way.
 - School action plans generally use percentage-based targets as the annual goal in the identified areas of improvement. Benchmarks measuring progress towards these goals at specific intervals during the school year are not indicated. Teacher team and class action plans also do not contain interim benchmarks for targeted students. The lack of these structures hampers the school's ability to determine the effectiveness of their actions along the way to allow for contingencies and make timely adjustments that improve outcomes. It also limits the school's ability to align planning from one year to the next.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: High School of Graphic Communication Arts	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