



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**Frederick Douglass Academy II**

**Middle – High School 860**

**215 West 114<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York  
NY 10026**

**Principal: Osei Owusu-Afriyie**

**Dates of review: May 25 – 26, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Sara Carvajal**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Frederick Douglass Academy II is a middle–high school with 413 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 78% Black, 17% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 89.5%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal makes informed organizational decisions regarding the use of time, funding and space to support improvements to learning.
  - In alignment with school-wide goals, this year's instructional schedule enables grade- and subject-specific teacher teams to meet weekly for professional development workshops, common planning sessions and inquiry-based work. Additionally, opportunities now exist in the daily program for small-group instruction across all grades for targeted students, including a well-received and engaging credit recovery program that strikes a well-grounded balance between web-based and teacher-driven instruction. As a result, students are making significant strides in recuperating deficient skills areas while also gaining steady momentum with credit accumulation.
- School leadership has established precise monitoring protocols and resources which support efficient teacher evaluation and administrative decision-making.
  - As the school community collectively navigates the foci of differentiated instruction and improved clarity and consistency of instructional aims, the administration utilizes a highly defined framework to evaluate teacher effectiveness. Detailed, narrative feedback is shared with teachers in a timely fashion. Supervision is then complemented by a wide range of professional development supports, including intervisitation between colleagues, individual consultations between administrators and teachers, and mentoring for novice teachers. This intense investment in the cycle of supervision has resulted in a wave of change to teacher assignments so that students experience improved classroom experiences.
- School leaders and staff have collaborated effectively to implement new structures that position the school towards a productive school climate and improved academic success.
  - The school is currently experiencing a renaissance of positive school climate. The original FDA Scholars' Creed and Twelve Non-Negotiables, as well as motivational quotes, have recently resurfaced as a driving force on the corridor walls, in student planners and during weekly Town Hall sessions. In addition, the new principal has "centralized supports for students", expanding the school's dynamic team of counsellors and advisors with additional personnel while incorporating conflict resolution and other youth development services into the weekly instructional schedule. As a result, the overall attendance rate is steadily improving while suspension data has dramatically dropped by over 50% since last year.
- Students and their families benefit greatly from multiple opportunities to discuss student progress that support increased awareness of academic strengths and areas of concern.
  - Students and parents alike sincerely appreciate the accessibility of school leaders, who readily communicate with them via personal meetings, mid-marking period progress reports, phone calls, email and a web-based database. As a

result of the assorted streams for reciprocal conversation, many families feel they are well-informed of their children's academic and personal successes and areas for improvement.

- Professional collaboration is high priority, and faculty are afforded varied opportunities to share and develop strengths as individuals and members of the teaching community.
  - The school offers staff multiple layers of structured meeting time each week to roll out and understand the evolving State standards, develop curriculum, and immerse itself in its evolving inquiry work. This plethora of professional learning is led by a balance of administrators and teacher leaders. Additionally, teachers benefit from visits to exemplary high schools within the network as they learn by observing the promising practices and resources of colleagues. Consequently, several teachers are beginning to plan and pilot several curricular adaptations, including science lab manuals which demand increased rigor in writing for the subject area.

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

- Increase rigor, coherence and alignment in the school's curriculum with key standards, ensuring that all students make progress in their learning.
  - The school has done an exceptional job in identifying successful curricula at exemplary sites within its network in order to make purposeful instructional decisions and invest in well-matched resources as it develops its own standards-aligned scope and sequence. However, the current mix and match of patchwork adaptations of curricula from other sites do not yet provide all students, and in particular, English language learners, with a consistent emphasis on developing higher order thinking skills across all grades and subject areas. Consequently, this sub-group of students often demonstrates that it does not fully grasp the content of that which is being taught.
- Deepen the use of data in planning for differentiated instruction so that learning activities across all subject areas consistently provide suitable challenge for all students.
  - Through assorted professional development opportunities, teachers are becoming increasingly familiar with a variety of valuable approaches for differentiating instruction to small groups of students. However, several teachers do not yet demonstrate the implementation of said practices, which include the data-driven grouping of students and appropriately matching tiered tasks to student achievement levels during daily instruction. As a result, student work and classroom participation across the site reflect highly uneven levels of engagement and interest.
- Refine the use of interim assessments so that teachers regularly use assorted data sources in their on-going evaluation and modification of instructional decision-making.
  - The school is on a good trajectory in using in-house Regents simulations to gather live data on student progress throughout the school year. In most cases, teachers have used the results of these assessments to set "glow and grow" goal-setting benchmarks for groups of students. However, several students

across grades do not yet understand their academic strengths and deficiencies, and as a result, remain disconnected from the purpose of the school's goal-setting process. In addition, the school does not yet utilize the trends of this supplemental assessment data to systematically discuss teacher effectiveness of instruction. Therefore, many teachers do not yet use the supplemental data as a prime resource in their self-evaluation of curricular and instructional decision-making, which is integral to improved practice.

- Expand on the recently introduced goal-setting structure so that teachers use it as a steady scaffold that supports the improvement of instructional practice.
  - The school has worked rigorously this year in establishing a new goal-setting structure across all grades and subject areas. To this end, “glow and grow” charts are posted in the vast majority of classrooms to remind students and their teachers of their strengths and target areas. These goals are drafted with the intent of leveraging classroom practice by providing teachers a focused lens for instructional planning. However, since the structure is at a nascent phase, student achievement has not yet demonstrated significant increases.
- Systematize structures that enable school leaders and teachers to effectively measure progress with goal-setting so that adjustments are made in a timely fashion throughout the year.
  - The school periodically analyzes a variety of assorted streams of data, including attendance reports, scholarship reports and disciplinary data, in order to informally check in on the effectiveness of newly established goals and recently implemented initiatives on student achievement. However, at this time, the school does not yet systematically measure the progress made in a formally structured fashion. Consequently, modifications to school-wide and student-specific goals are not made consistently at interim points throughout the school year.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

|   |           |          |          |           |
|---|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>School name: Frederick Douglass Academy II</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> |