

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Albert Shanker School For Visual & Performing Arts

30Q126

**31-51 21 Street
Queens
NY 11106**

Principal: Alexander Angueira

Dates of review: February 14-15, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Khalek Kirkland

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Albert Shanker School for Visual & Performing Arts is a middle school with 597 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 22% Black, 52% Hispanic, 8% White, and 17% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 22% 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 92%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School staff delivers an engaging standards-based curriculum aligned to the common core that addresses the needs of a diverse group of learners.
 - The school has set up a schedule for common planning each week where teachers get together to review student work and compare it to common core standards. Teachers have already begun training on the common core and have begun to turnkey training throughout the school, which has led to English language learners showing progress on interim assessments.
 - Each teacher recognizes that one focus for the school is to ensure success for English language learners and students with disabilities. To that end, the school uses common planning time by grade level where close attention is given to these sub-groups around the standards chosen in order to ensure their academic success. After showing significant student improvement on baseline exams and interim assessments in writing using Writing Matters, the school was able to institute Achieve 3000 in order to focus attention on reading standards.
- The school has a coherent set of beliefs around differentiation and instructional planning that engage students throughout the building.
 - Each teacher uses data to differentiate for their students via process, content and product. Data profile sheets for every student, which includes results from NYS exams, Acuity results, Fountas and Pinnell levels, learning styles and career goals, allow for flexible grouping based on multiple data sources and learning styles. Consequently, students are demonstrating higher scores on Acuity data in comparison to last year's performance. In addition, Fountas and Pinnell reading levels are rising throughout the building.
 - Teachers across content areas get together to plan different assignments for each group. In each group students are given a task, extension activity and homework assignment, which is clear and visible via an 8x11 picture frame for each table. As a result, students are engaged in tasks assigned based on their most recent assessment and are able to apply concepts to solve non-routine problems.
- The school leader's strategic organizational decisions around teacher programs allow for instructional planning time that ensures consistency across classrooms, allowing for higher levels of student achievement.
 - All teachers utilize their 25th teaching period for planning each month which include a department meeting and grade level meeting. In addition, teachers meet during the 37.5 minutes each Thursday for planning. Consequently, exemplar teaching practices are demonstrated, resulting in increased student performance on both ITA exams and monthly teacher generated exams aligned to common core standards.
 - When assigning teachers to their classes at the start of the year, an emphasis was placed on prior years' data. In addition, integrated co-teaching classes were assigned after looking at teacher data reports.

Consequently, students were assigned teachers who demonstrated proven results with particular sub-groups. These same teachers have showed gains similar to that of general education students.

- The school leader has created a culture where students' needs are known and addressed.
 - Every grade is assigned both an assistant principal and dean of students. As a result of their work, the tone in the building is one in which students treat each other with respect at all times. The reduction in incidents has created a setting where student learning is the priority in every classroom.
 - City Year is a volunteer program that works with students from arrival to dismissal. These volunteers are assigned with a focus on chronic absenteeism. This program, along with the many others at the school, helps to make sure each student is well known by at least one adult while supporting the students' socio-emotional learning. Consequently the school has seen 11% improvement in the attendance for its most chronic students.
- Teams of teachers gather and analyze data based on instructional goals of the school in ways that support individual needs and the progress of sub-groups.
 - After each periodic exam, administrators break down data in a cabinet meeting and then disseminate the information to teachers by grade and subject. Teachers identify at least one student from each of the targeted sub-groups and examine ongoing data related to their progress. As a result, the school has made curricular decisions in a timely fashion, including the use of Achieve 3000, brought on to address reading standards.
 - In department meetings, teachers use interim data to place students in new flexible groups. These decisions are individualized for each student, which consequently allows for targeted instruction in every subject area. Exits slips are also used to understand each student's strengths and areas of need, which are addressed the very next day via conferencing.
- School administrators use the observation tool to communicate the instructional focus of the school, which results in consistent classroom practices that ensure student success.
 - The principal determines the instructional focus every two weeks. Assistant principals are then assigned a grade and subject area where they are required to conduct both formal and informal observations. The principal collects observation reports in a timely fashion in order to target learning opportunities around professional teaching standards.
 - Teachers are assisted in creating portfolios, which are reviewed three times per year. The principal meets with non-tenured staff by subject area to discuss professional development opportunities. This guided assistance has allowed for proactive tenure decisions based on student achievement in conjunction with the superintendent.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the methods of feedback provided to parents to include consistent opportunities for parents to assist their children academically.
 - Currently the school has not provided adequate training in using and understanding the information within ARIS. Consequently, parent understanding of student data varies and thus, their ability to effectively support children in their learning is limited.
 - School staff instituted Workshop Wednesdays, eleven-week workshops around mental health, stress, smoking and age appropriate behavior. However many families express concerns around not having enough information around how their children are progressing academically as progress reports are only disseminated quarterly.
- Strengthen communication to families to convey high expectations so that all parents see their role in supporting the academic progress of their children.
 - The school uses a school handbook to detail low level and perfunctory rules for staff and students. However, the school does not communicate with parents well about school goals based on sub-groups and or its plan to remove itself from Corrective Action status, leaving many parents to make false assumptions about the school closing.
 - Incentives for parents to become involved with school decisions are done via pizza parties and an open door policy by the principal. However, with low parent participation in the PTA, there are very few opportunities for parents with decision making beyond the school leadership team, which some parents argue is not a true reflection of the parent community.
- Develop a professional development plan for teachers to include assistance around youth development in order to decrease referrals and suspensions.
 - Teachers are given a handbook at the beginning of the year, which includes rules and expectations around lesson planning and fire drills. However the lack of professional development around the social-emotional development of students leads to overdependence on outside programs.
 - Deans conduct monthly assembly periods for at-risk students via referrals. However, a review of teacher responses on the school survey might suggest ways to examine professional development around supports for teachers around safety.
- Establish processes that promote changes to policies around the delivery of instruction in order to impact trends for higher performing students.
 - All teachers consistently place students in flexible groups based on recent assessment data. However, structures are yet established to regularly evaluate and adjust instructional practices, which sometimes do not address the learning needs of higher functioning students.
 - Students are given different assignments based on their assigned groups, which they move in and out of throughout the year. However, within these groups there is limited evidence of different resources for the few students performing above grade level who are not in Regents classes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Albert Shanker School For Visual & Performing 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