



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**Academy for Scholarship and Entrepreneurship**

**High School X270**

**921 East 228<sup>th</sup> Street**

**Bronx**

**NY 10466**

**Principal: Zenobia White**

**Dates of review: January 5 – 6, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Geri Taylor-Brown**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Academy for Scholarship and Entrepreneurship: A College Board School is a secondary school with 604 students from grade 6 through grade 9. The school population comprises 62% Black, 33% Hispanic, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 92.2%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and other school leaders carefully allocate resources to support instruction, organization and programs that improve student learning.
  - School leaders have made significant adjustments to the class schedule. They rightly recognized the need to bolster middle school student skills in ELA and math. As such, they adjusted the school schedule to include 8 periods of instruction, per week, in these academic areas for these students. Teachers report some increases in the percentage of students passing classes. In addition, an Assistant Principal of Security was hired this school year. This has contributed to a school tone which supports continued student learning.
- The school keeps students and parents informed about student progress and offer encouragement and support to insure continued student success.
  - Parents spoke excitedly about their usage of GradeLink. This online program allows them to see daily student progress through their child's page which includes homework assignments, exam scores, class work, and more. This tool has empowered parents as true educational partners to teachers. As one parent stated, "You know what's happening even before the progress report." In addition to the usage of GradeLink, parents and staff members spoke about ongoing communications where parents share their concerns and convey their thoughts about how their child learns. The principal poignantly states, "Feedback is the primary convenience of information." Parents echo this sentiment and are proud to be active contributors to their child's educational progress.
- The school communicates high expectations for all students through recognition of student success and total inclusion making students and parents educational partners.
  - The school has adopted the goal of encouraging each student to receive an 80% or better in all classes. All stakeholders are keenly aware of this policy and actively engage in promoting this practice. As a result, student passing rates in classes have improved.
  - Parents point with pride to their contributions and influence in the development and implementation of interventions. Specifically, parents spoke about their influence in the school's development of a safe corridor for students at dismissal. As a result, parents feel that they can speak with school personnel and get positive responses.
- Teachers are empowered to own their learning through regular participation in varied professional development activities.
  - The school offers multiple opportunities for teachers to meet. During these meetings teachers collegially share teaching strategies. This practice helps teachers improve their teaching skills as they begin to implement the instructional suggestions of their colleagues. This has

resulted in incremental academic improvement. During these sessions teachers often refer to the “Big 5”: the five major focus points of the school. In addition, they are moving forward with aligning these goals and school curriculum with the Common /Core State Standards. This recent initiative is a critical focal point for staff as they actively grapple with acquiring clear and consistent understanding of where student should be academically. This creative thinking has contributed to added energy in the teaching process.

- The school provides myriad student support from both internal personnel and external sources to meet social and emotional needs of students and their families.
  - The community based organization, The Children’s Aid Society (CAS), has done an outstanding job in their work with students and families. They offer 450 students the opportunity for tutoring, college visits, internships and job shadowing. To participate in their internships, students must open a bank account to have their stipends deposited. This effective strategy makes real world connections for students and begins a good “life” practice. In addition, CAS offers training for school staff members, empowering them with skills that build meaningful relationships with students. This strong practice is what students say makes them feel that “there is always someone to talk to” – “You can always get one-on-one time”.

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

- Strengthen curriculum knowledge by continuing to learn and explore the evolving Standards.
  - The school has not yet selected any key State standards as a specific focus. There are efforts to align curriculum with the Common Core State Standards. However, administrative thinking points to “touching on” all standards throughout the year. This lack of purposeful selection thwarts the establishment of a coherent instructional focus and impedes consistent student growth across content areas.
  - Teacher lesson planning includes varying student assignments. For example, in one English class students were offered the option of developing a diagram or writing a list. However, this example and other similar tasks assigned do not reach the great diversity of learning needs. Thus, in many classrooms, there were students who finished tasks quickly and were awaiting new instruction.
- Deepen teacher understanding and skills in the use of differentiated instructional strategies to provide consistent in teaching across all classrooms.
  - Teachers are working hard moving their instruction into alignment with the curriculum. For example, some classrooms had learning stations and some teachers employ a longer wait time. However, the principal states that the school is “on the way to developing a coherent vision of how students learn best.” The current effective instructional practices are not

yet fully embedded throughout the school. As a result, the impact of teaching is uneven as is student achievement.

- Student engagement greatly varies in classrooms across all subjects. Higher achieving students complete tasks quickly while struggling students take longer as they work on their assignments. This unevenness in learning hinders consistent academic growth for all students.
- Refine assessment development practices to ensure alignment with Standards and to promote immediate teacher usage in making adjustments to instruction
  - Teachers have begun focusing their team meetings on a review of student work. The natural segue of this assessment practice is the adjustment of instruction to meet student. However, current student work evaluation practices are just commencing and do not yet include detailed and intricate review that sharply aligns curriculum and instruction, and clearly impacts student learning. This limited evaluation is complicated by a thin data analysis and has stifled consistent academic student growth
- Extend the teacher evaluation process to enable all teachers to directly link student achievement with improved pedagogy.
  - Current teacher evaluation practices include teacher completion of a “Professional Goals Sheet”, classroom observations and participation on teacher teams. However, these interventions are not linked for individual teachers. For example, one teacher’s goals included “embedding reading and writing strategies into lessons”. But the classroom observation made no reference to or any mention of this or other goals for this teacher. While the feedback to teachers is specific, it does not clearly link how all interventions contribute to improving teaching skills. In addition, there is no reference to how improving pedagogy impacts student learning. These disconnects thwart teacher growth and impede movement towards a common instructional focus and school coherence.
- Establish solid systems and structure that provide a forum for measuring progress towards long and short range goals.
  - The school has not yet established consistency across classes for measuring student progress. The principal and cabinet meet regularly and have begun “deeper discussions” about how to ensure a unified focus on instruction. However, instructional interventions are not expediently implemented. For example, teachers are using “on-the-spot” assessments, such as the thumbs-up/thumbs-down to immediately measure understanding. However, there is no adjustment or moderation to instruction to support the students who did not understand the lesson. In addition teacher teams are beginning the good practice of looking at student work. However, this is presently a developing practice that has not yet impacted student achievement.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: The Academy for Scholarship and Entrepreneurship: A College Board School</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?			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				
<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?		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				
<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?		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					
<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>

