



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Frederick Douglas Academy V

Middle School

12X273

**2111 Crotona Avenue
Bronx, NY 10457**

**Principal:
Deborah Cimini**

Dates of review: March 30 - 31, 2011

**Lead Reviewer:
Leslie Miller Chislett**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Frederick Academy V is a middle school with 263 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 37% Black, 60% Hispanic, 1% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 89%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Schools leaders strategically align resources and make organizational decisions that support instructional goals and address diverse needs.
 - Funding, space, time, staff and mentors are secured to provide support services, technology, field trips and enrichment programs. Before and after school tutorials, Saturday Academy, pull-out academic intervention during the day, performing arts, Scholar Science and Spanish classes contribute to students' academic success.
 - Administrators model shared responsibility for student learning by teaching classes and partnering classroom teachers with special education teachers, teachers of English language learners and paraprofessionals. This reinforces school goals and fosters learning for adults and children.
- The school sustains a safe and inclusive culture that supports learners who want to succeed and are supported in their academic and personal growth.
 - School staff use attendance data, the Learning Environment Survey, and an open-door policy to gain feedback from parents and improve programs, policies and supports. This produces a family-like atmosphere where adolescents develop socially, emotionally as well academically.
 - The school's environment is strengthened through community non-negotiables, a creed for academy conduct, gender-based groupings during lunch and recess, and rituals for celebrating accomplishments. Children and parents express that students feel safe, aspire to succeed and are confident they will be assisted as they reach learning goals.
- Teachers use assessments that are aligned to the school's curriculum and to priority standards to analyze information on student learning needs and determine instructional adjustments that result in student achievement gains.
 - Teams, including the English department and seventh grade team, purposefully use assessments such as common writing prompts or state predictive tests that are aligned with the school's focus on cross-disciplinary literacy skills. These have generated feedback on classroom instruction and improved student organization on writing tasks.
 - Working individually or as teams, teachers use common Periodic assessments in math and reading to identify literacy strengths and needs of students by grade, subject and special groupings. For example, comprehension strategies like inferring were targeted by social studies and science sixth and seventh grade teachers, which produced an observed increase in student use of these strategies.

- School leaders and faculty skillfully create and use various tools for organizing assessment data to analyze student performance trends and inform decision-making on the school and classroom level.
 - The English Language Arts team leverages tools and reports from various assessments to analyze student performance. This analysis guides decisions, including guided reading groups and intervention services. Teachers are better able to attend to individual needs and advance student questioning, reading and independent learning skills as observed, for example, with sixth grade English Language Learners.
 - Student progress towards reading and math goals is organized and displayed in reports, graphs and charts. This work is used to motivate students, and to tailor groupings, book selection and assignments in ways that help define gaps and next learning steps for students.
- Teachers use collaborative and data-informed processes to identify student needs for supports or extensions and set differentiated goals to ensure individuals and groups of students are on a path to mastery of standards.
 - Individual teachers, subject and grade teams analyze data from assessments and student work in areas such as reading comprehension, academic vocabulary and thematic essays to identify needs, vary learning goals and tailor work or special services. The effect has improved writing and resulted in achievement gains for sub-groups of students.
 - As teachers collaboratively refine goals for student learning, these are leveraged to improve classroom practice. For example, while monitoring goals for student literacy skills, teachers adopted common writing and reading strategies such as outlining, comparing texts and tiered vocabulary reinforcement, which strengthened student performance on classroom writing tasks and predictive state social studies assessments.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine curriculum maps to consistently emphasize academic tasks that are cognitively demanding and rigorous thinking routines that will elevate student learning and work products at all grade levels.
 - Although curriculum is well-defined in English Language Arts, challenging content and skills have not been explicitly outlined across subject areas. This is necessary to ensure students are challenged in accordance with college-readiness standards and achievement gaps are narrowed.
 - Teachers in some classrooms use strategies like essential questions or cause and effect analysis in order to elevate thinking. However, higher order skills are not consistently emphasized across subjects. Without consistently guiding students in productive dialogue and thinking, the school cannot ensure that all students reach their academic potential.
- Ensure more even use of instructional strategies that lead to high levels of student engagement and thinking across classrooms and that create multiple entry points into the curricula so that every student is challenged.

- Grouping, leveled tasks and student choice are strategies used in some classrooms. However, without consistently providing multiple approaches to learning tasks, teachers cannot ensure success for all students.
- Currently, students are eager and prepared, and in some classes, their eagerness is supported by an engaging curriculum. However, in several classes, teacher-centered lessons lacked participation or voice. Without consistent strategies for engaging all students, the school cannot move learners to produce more sophisticated work and thinking processes.
- Leverage classroom observations, analysis of student data to foster teachers' reflection on learning outcomes and advance professional growth that results in elevated instruction and improved student performance.
 - School leaders provide regular feedback to support teacher development. However, the feedback is not often based on pre-established goals derived from the analysis of student data or work products or common framework. Without a more proactive approach, the school cannot ensure that feedback guides teachers toward a specific, planned outcome.
 - Interested and struggling teachers are supported with informal mentoring, teaming and outside professional development. However, without a more comprehensive plan that is aligned to school goals and targets, the enhancement of individual faculty members' professional practice and collective practice will not be optimal.
- Create structures to systematically evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and assessment practices to determine the implications for improving achievement in light of the evolving state standards.
 - Teacher teams often discuss how to improve practice in light of student needs. However, no formal mechanism has been established to review and improve the quality and alignment of curriculum and assessment in each content area. This work is vital to heighten academic achievement.
 - No formal means of assessing the effectiveness of current professional development practices in light of curriculum needs is established. Although certain faculty members have begun to explore the evolving State standards, the work related to determining what curriculum and teacher practices need to change is ahead. In the absence of this evaluation, student proficiency rates are negatively impacted.
- Develop structures to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams in setting measurable goals and monitoring performance trends in order to build greater teacher capacity and improve student progress.
 - School leaders support teacher team agendas through on-going informal communication and feedback. However, leadership has not established processes for examining the quality of goals teacher teams establish, whether they are measurable and how teams monitor progress towards these for groups of students. This evaluation is important to determine team impact and to ensure student achievement is advancing.

- Student assessment data is not consistently looked at to determine the effectiveness of professional development. Until administration incorporates this data in a process of examining professional development, teacher growth initiatives are limited and impact unclear.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Frederick Douglas Academy V	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
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