

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**Fordham Leadership Academy for Business and  
Technology**

**High School 438**

**500 East Fordham Road  
Bronx  
NY 10458**

**Principal: Richard Bost**

**Dates of review: November 3 – 4, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Terrell**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Fordham Leadership Academy for Business and Technology is a high school with 489 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 36% Black, 58% Hispanic, 2% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 60% of the students enrolled and girls account for 40%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 78.6%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is underdeveloped.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Across the school, teachers are engaged in professional team collaborations that encourage distributed leadership to support shaping student outcomes.
  - The principal worked with the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) to implement a school based option enabling all teachers to participate in structured teacher team collaborations in all subjects and for all cohorts. English teachers meet daily to discuss instructional strategies and grouping of students. This practice is beginning to impact learning outcomes as evidenced by some improvement in student participation in classroom assignments and work products.
  - The instructional team, comprised of several teachers, meets weekly with the principal to make key decisions on instructional practices and is currently reviewing the beginning stages of implementing a new grading system aligned to student products. The team is also focusing on designing rubrics aligned to student products so that there is a clear understanding of expectations. As a result, students say that they better understand how to improve their work products.
- School leaders and staff align curriculum to State standards and selected cross-discipline skills to articulate rubrics and impact student achievement.
  - Across all grades and disciplines, the school aligns the curriculum to State standards. The selection of annotation and summarization as points of focus enables students to use these strategies to identify key points in text to support their understanding of main concepts, resulting in students improving in their ability to understand and respond to classroom level assignments.
  - EASE, a computer software program, is used to design rubrics that evaluate student work products. Teachers' design a rubric for an overarching task with identified categories, resulting in students receiving a rating of 'not there yet', 'proficient', or 'highly proficient'. In the science lab, a rubric's evaluates each student's work for its organization, maintaining a portfolio, lab tools, graphing, and the scientific method. This new system shows some evidence of students wanting to get "highly proficient" which is supportive of increasing student outcomes.
- Across classrooms, teaching practices are beginning to reflect strategies about how students learn best, which are starting to impact student work.
  - In an English classroom, the teacher engaged students in a discussion about characterization using the story of Cinderella as a common focus to develop character traits. Student groups were then each assigned a task around how writers develop credible characters in the book they were reading, thus linking the activity to their own work. This provides support to help students understand creating credible characters, and in producing positive work products.

- The principal's organizational decisions create alignment between the school's instructional focus and classroom practices, resulting in improvements to student attendance and a moderate impact on student achievement.
  - The administration supports its instructional focus to increase student outcomes by incorporating daily common planning time for all teachers to discuss instructional tasks that are aligned to the EASE software program. This decision supports the beginnings of improved student growth.
  - In response to many students coming late or leaving early, the school currently implements block scheduling to assure that students are present for all scheduled assigned classes. To further assure students attending, the principal rotates the schedule so there is a different order of classes each day of the week. As a result, lateness and cutting have decreased.

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

- Build supervisory structures to provide ongoing feedback to teachers to improve teaching strategies.
  - The use of classroom observations does not provide ongoing feedback in line with the school's instructional goals. The three assistant principals are not actively involved in developing supports for teachers. Recommendations on performance evaluations are not focused on the development of effective teaching strategies to support higher order thinking, and are not consistently aligned to student outcomes. Consequently, consistent student growth is not supported.
  - The newly created professional growth committee has not established outreach to teachers in need of instructional support. Teachers can volunteer to visit other classes without feedback from an administrator as part of the protocol. However, as of yet there have been no inter-visitations to evaluate the instructional practice of higher order thinking skills that would support improved student achievement.
- Design measurable and differentiated goals aligned to data, for subgroups and students at risk, to improve student performance at the classroom level.
  - The school's common planning allows teacher teams to meet daily. These teams however, do not use data to set measurable and differentiated goals for relevant subgroups or students at-risk. As a result, the school cannot determine the areas where targeted students require additional support at the classroom level, thus limiting the impact on student outcomes.
- Establish interim school-wide goals and action plans to address the needs of students struggling to accumulate credits to support progress toward graduation.
  - The school acknowledges that there is a gap between students meeting Regents' passing rates but do not have sufficient credits to graduate. Currently, the lack of a school-wide goal and action plan to target students who are not on track to accumulate sufficient credits precludes struggling at-risk students from meeting graduation requirements.
- Build protocols in teacher team meetings to analyze periodic assessment data and student work products to determine school trends in order to support differentiated instruction.

- Although teacher teams meet daily, they do not have established protocols to disaggregate periodic assessment student data to determine student trends. As a result, students' needs are not prioritized and not addressed through classroom instruction to support increased outcomes.
- The majority of teachers do not gather sufficient data to differentiate instruction based on identified students needs. Consequently, there is a lack of differentiated instructional strategies at the classroom level to support strong student outcomes.
- Develop benchmarks and refine rubrics to measure student progress to increase the coherence of effective instruction and assessment practices across grades and subjects.
  - Although the school has begun to implement a new rubrics-based grading system, there are no benchmarks established to regularly evaluate students' progress. Currently, teachers design individual rubrics that do not support coherence of effective instructional practices across grades and subjects. Therefore, the rubrics do not support improved student outcomes at a high level of engagement.
  - School leaders are in the process of developing structures to share the new grading system with students and parents. The principal is conducting a student survey to ascertain what work they believe is "proficient" and "highly proficient". Consequently, the impact of this new system on classroom level work cannot be measured.
- Enhance staff and family support systems to create a consistent and supportive school culture.
  - The school lacks sufficient support systems to create the sense of a supportive school culture. Some teachers articulated that they do not feel supported by the principal. The current Learning Environment Survey reflects that only 34% of the staff believes the school maintains order and discipline. Because of the lack of these systems, the school is not positioned to support positive student outcomes for all stakeholders.
  - The school has developed new support services to address student social/emotional needs and real world experiences. An outside guidance program for 12<sup>th</sup> graders, Ignition for 9<sup>th</sup> graders and Friday Advisory for all students enables students to interact with staff on an informal level. However, there are no supports for families. Thus, not all stakeholders are engaged in student success.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Fordham Leadership Academy for Business and Technology</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>