

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Academy for Scholarship and Entrepreneurship: A College
Board School**

Secondary School X270

**921 EAST 228TH STREET
BRONX
NY 10466**

Principal: Zenobia White

**Dates of review: March 1 - 2, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Catherine M. Powis**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Academy for Scholarship and Entrepreneurship: A College Board School is a Middle/High School with 622 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 64% Black, 32% Hispanic, 0% White, 3% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 5% 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 2010 - 2011 was 87.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders review data that guides the identification of overall school strengths and areas in need of improvement that result in the development of annual goals. (2.1)
 - Regarding grades 9 through 12, school leaders carefully analyze attendance patterns, incident trends, credit accumulation, Regents passing rates, scholarship reports, and graduation rate throughout the year as well as State exam item analyses across grades. Furthermore, Acuity analyses provide interim progress data in mathematics and English with particular attention to the lowest third including special education students. As a follow up to last year's Learning Environment Survey school-created midyear surveys provide data from parents and students regarding improvement trends in the learning environment. In turn, school leaders identify quarterly performance and progress trends of all learners especially those lagging behind. Consequently, this data stream presents a portrait of the school's strengths and current needs and informs instructional goals, course offerings for extended day assignments, and small-group intervention work to improve student outcomes.
- The school is working diligently with external partners to provide a safe environment that supports youth development and improved learning. (4.4)
 - In response to the concerns for school safety and respect on last year's Learning Environment Survey (LES) and suspension rates all stakeholders are effectively implementing the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS). Teachers receive professional development with the primary focus being efficacy training with an emphasis on improving student character. Workshops and peer training in classroom management is provided for teachers. A collaboration with on-site personnel of the Children's Aid Society offers students conflict management strategies such as peer mediation and conflict resolution. Additionally, incentives for good behavior and academic work are welcomed by parents and students who can redeem their "bucks" for merchandise in the school store. As a result, to date there is a 42.5% decrease in student suspensions over last year.
 - Following the school's theme of business and entrepreneurship students are excited to share their real world experience of creating and managing a business through the Virtual Enterprise partnership. One 12th grader shared her excitement over her first entrepreneur experience in opening a toy store with fellow students and participating in citywide entrepreneur competitions with other schools. Other students enthusiastically describe their internships at the Bronx courthouse, the local police precinct and restaurants. As one student aspires to become a chef, he is appreciative that he is learning how to finance a business and manage it. Consequently, students are ready and have choices to begin a career or enter college upon graduation.
- Families feel supported by the school's reciprocal communication about student performance resulting in an increased understanding of academic and social-emotional expectations. (2.4)
 - In response to an analysis of the last year's Learning Environment Survey the school works diligently to engage students and families in ongoing conversations

about progress and performance. The parent coordinator, teachers, and/or administrators conduct collaborative conferences with parents and their children to highlight credit accumulation and graduation status, subject-specific progress, attendance, and behavior. Weekend workshops for non-English parents are planned to assist them in understanding expectations for graduation, college, and credit accumulation. This, coupled with student progress reports, email communication, and access to on-line grade books that keep parents, as well as students, informed about that they are doing well and next steps needed to improve. As a result, a midyear school parent survey revealed that communication with an open-exchange of information has improved over last year.

- A vision for academic and social-emotional growth of students is evident in school wide goals and action plans that result in increased student achievement. (3.1)
 - The school's Comprehensive Education Plan reflects annual and interim goals and action plans for grades 9 through 12 in response to a needs assessment driven by the Progress Report, past Quality Reviews, and State accountability data. At School Leadership Team meetings goals are identified to increase credit accumulation, overall graduation rate, and decrease suspension rates. In turn, all stakeholders are involved in the process and support the plans for the school's pathway to improve students' progress for all learners. As a result, 56.7% of eleventh graders are on track for receiving 10+ credits this school year, up from 50.5%, over the last school year.
- The principal is working steadily in making organizational decisions that refocus the school on school-wide goals to improve student achievement. (1.3)
 - This school year teacher teams are scheduled for at least two periods per week. Some teams may meet more frequently. At the high school level grade and subject teacher teams are emerging as the forum for curriculum development and inquiry that focuses on students in the lowest third in progress and performance. In some teams overarching College-readiness Performance Assessment System (C-PAS) benchmark assessments are being developed with network assistance to engage students in challenging academic tasks. As a result, teachers are gaining an understanding of what constitutes cognitively engaging tasks that to improve instruction and student progress.
 - School leaders and faculty agreed to reconfigure teacher assignments during the 37 1/2 minutes extended day program. Grades 9 through 12 student attendance has increased this year as a result of the program being moved from the morning to after school. Additionally, unlike last year all students are assigned to academic advisories such as various Regents and RCT preparation tutoring and credit recovery specialties. 9th graders are further supported by the AVID program and advisory time for personal growth. This is coupled with course offerings that are annualized to maximize teaching and learning time. As a result, teacher assignments and student programs are becoming more aligned to the school's instructional goals and interim scholarship reports for all students show improvement in social studies, English, and mathematics.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop consistency in teachers' capacity to create rigorous tasks and curriculum that result in standards alignment and cognitive engagement for all learners. (1.1)

- The school is working diligently in developing curriculum maps using essential questions and enduring understandings to emphasize key concepts and learning based on the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Some content area teachers at the high school level, such as mathematics, are using an online tool for curriculum mapping to focus their work. While some staff incorporate higher order questions not all teachers refer to research-based rubrics that measure levels of rigor, such as Webb’s Depth of Knowledge levels, resulting in academic tasks that are not consistently rigorous. As a result, at this time the school does not consistently demonstrate that all teachers across content areas can create, revise, and refine units of study and tasks to maximize the academic challenge for higher achieving students as well as students with skill deficits.
- Improve teaching practices and academic tasks so that all lessons are challenging, differentiated, and extend student thinking that results in improved student learning. (1.2)
 - The use of data to inform lesson planning that takes into account the academic diversity of students is not uniformly practiced. Lessons are planned to include a “Do Now” assignment in the form of a question and a mini-lesson followed by group activities. In one social studies lesson an integrated classroom teaching team used data to offer group artifacts that matched student skill sets, especially special education students. However, most lessons include the same or similar activities for all groups and individual students. In turn, not all teaching strategies enable students to approach new content without being hampered by their skill deficits, and therefore students do not always understand the intended outcomes of the work. Consequently, some students do not make sufficient progress in acquiring new knowledge, skills, and understanding as evidenced in their work products.
 - In some classrooms student work and conversations, particularly in science and social studies, are rigorous in terms of demand for accuracy and evidence. However, in others teachers dominate the lesson with lower level questions and tasks that are not cognitively demanding. For example, very often students spend a lot of time copying notes from the SMARTboard with little time remaining to discuss what they are learning through thoughtful dialogue that fosters high levels of thinking. Additionally, the irregular use of content vocabulary hampers further student discussion. As a result, levels of student engagement and participation are uneven, and student work products do not consistently reflect critical thinking and understanding of content concepts and skill sets.
- Develop assessment practices that ensure coherence across classrooms and content areas for ongoing identification of specific and detailed learning needs in order to improve student outcomes. (2.2)
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers maintain data binders with various assessment data for students they teach. School leaders make Periodic Assessment data available to teachers. However, binders reflect inconsistencies regarding what data is considered critical to drive instruction. Few teachers effectively analyze Acuity data to identify student strengths and needs, especially special education students. Additionally, most teachers circulate the classroom to assist students who need help with a task. However, across classrooms conferencing or documentation that records student strengths and next steps to improve is inconsistent. As a result, adjustments to instructional decisions are hampered and student progress is not achieved.

- A new subject-specific portfolio system was implemented this year to identify strengths and needs of each student through the on-going collection and review of student work. The structure provides for teacher feedback to students and student templates for self-monitoring their work. However, across grades and content areas there are inconsistencies of student work samples and teachers' ability to provide students with sufficient, on-going feedback to meet their next learning steps. Consequently, this assessment practice has not gained traction and is not yet reliable for teachers to make adjustments to meet all students' learning needs, especially special education students. As a result, special education student scholarship data, Regents pass rate, and the diploma rate lags behind higher performing students.
- Improve teacher pedagogy through explicit feedback with clear next steps that ensures improvement of learning and achievement. (4.1)
 - The principal as well as assistant principals utilize a newly implemented web-based teacher observation tool that is aligned to a research-based framework designed to norm expectations for teacher practice. Formal and informal observations are documented in writing and returned to teachers as feedback for improvements in practice. However, the provision for scheduling time for regular and frequent feedback by administration to teachers relating to strengths, weaknesses and next steps, as evidenced in student work, is inconsistent. Additionally, written comments by school leaders do not yet demonstrate a common understanding of how feedback between school leaders and teachers should be explicitly aligned to the selected framework with clear expectations for improvement. For example, one school leader provides feedback that is sketchy and not related to the research-based framework attributes while another provides explicit and actionable feedback for teacher development. Consequently, teachers are not always provided with articulate and coherent next steps for best instructional practices that lead to professional growth. Thus, this hampers students' academic and behavioral outcomes.
- Formalize effective systems that regularly evaluate the quality of curricular and instructional decisions with a focus on modifying policies and practices that ensure coherence across classrooms. (5.1)
 - Capacity-building practices are developing through the work of several teacher teams, some with a lens on content curriculum and instruction, and others on school-wide student data trends and social-emotional growth. However, although school leaders are administering midyear surveys to parents and students to assess progress toward goal achievement, formalized systems are developing to determine effectiveness of preliminary teamwork on integrating CCLS expectations in curriculum, instructional and organizational practices that ensures consistently rigorous expectations for student learning and outcomes. Consequently, next steps for improvements in this work cannot be accurately determined, thus hampering improvements in student progress as evidenced in student work products.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Academy for Scholarship and Entrepreneurship: A College Board School	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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?		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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?		X		
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?			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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?		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, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS?		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
-----------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------