

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Performing Arts and Technology High School

High School 19K507

**400 Pennsylvania Avenue
BROOKLYN, NY 11207
Principal: Reginald Richardson**

**Dates of review: Jan 14-15, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Karen Watts**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Performing Arts and Technology High School, PATHS, is a high school with students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 82% Black, 17% Hispanic, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 77.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is Proficient.

What the school does well

- Students are immersed in rigorous academic tasks in common core aligned units and rich curricula in core subjects and performing arts thematic electives, that address their interests as they develop higher order skills to ensure postsecondary readiness. (1.1)
 - The school approaches its curriculum development through the lens of what graduates must know and be able to do in order to be prepared for success in college and/or the workforce. To that end, the school's curriculum emphasizes fundamental skill building in the ninth grade including three periods of literacy using the Scholastic ID curriculum. In the tenth grade English language arts, (ELA), and Global Studies are mapped together to ensure that student writing in the Global Studies class is supported by instruction in writing in the ELA. Also, in tenth grade, students choose a performing arts specialty from among dance, vocal music, theater, stage design and set building, or theater technology, thus addressing student's interests in the arts and developing their talents. In the eleventh grade students begin to take more advanced courses such as Algebra II, trigonometry, and advanced placement and college level courses including College Now courses. While in the twelfth grade students take advanced placement courses such as Spanish, biology and chemistry. As part of the Expanded Success Initiative, the school plans to offer a course on Race, Class, and Gender in response to a need to provide a more culturally responsive education to address the challenges minority males face in rigorous academic environments. The school uses the Literacy Design Collaborative and the Math Design Collaborative to ensure that unit plans are aligned to the Common Core Standards and that students are exposed to challenging academic tasks. These practices develop students' higher order thinking resulting in the Algebra I Regents' pass rate increasing to 71% up from 29% three years ago, an increase in the number of students taking College Now and advanced placement courses, and a 10% increase in the number of student in the last graduating class enrolling in college.
- The school's philosophy that all students can achieve mastery is embraced by the teachers who provide students with suitable teaching strategies to demonstrate their academic success. (1.2)
 - The school's belief that students' engagement in tasks that promote higher order thinking pushes their thinking and helps them formulate ideas is evidenced by the school promoting the development of safe classrooms where mutual trust and respect among teachers and students exist and students are given the opportunities to ask, formulate, and respond to questions. Additionally, the teachers provide multiple opportunities for students to improve academically through revisions, re-doing, and re-thinking, and teachers are encouraged to re-teach and re-test so that students demonstrate learning. All teachers use a lesson plan template that guides them to design lessons that provide all students with access to the curriculum and with differentiated activities that meet their needs, engages them in challenging tasks, and support their improvement through cycles of revisions/rehearsals so that they create portfolios of exemplary work. Teachers have easy access to the Individual Education Plans, IEP, on Skedula, the school's data repository, for students with disabilities, (SWD) so that they plan accordingly. Teachers use the Paideia model for classroom discussions that promote text-based discussions and lead to better crafted argumentative/persuasive essays. These practices ensure that students master the curriculum and create portfolios of exemplary work resulting in improvements in ninth grade credit accumulation and the four-year graduation rate.

- The principal's strategic use of the school's resources, including carefully developed partnerships, is aligned to the school's instructional goals ensuring quality instruction and improvements in students' academic performance. (1.3)
 - The principal credits the school leadership team, (SLT), and the instructional leadership team, (ILT), with the supporting of his decision-making through consensus that has led to improvements in students' academic performance. A yearly retreat enables the ILT to look at the most recent school wide data, including Regents' Exams, semester scholarship, and Learning Environment Survey results. Many of the recent organization decisions such as double blocking Algebra I and Living Environment and triple blocking literacy in the ninth grade came from this team. Additionally, other recent decisions included hiring a college advisor to ensure that students were receiving all college related information in a timely manner, hiring Literacy Design and Math Design Collaborative coaches to push curriculum development and implementation, allotting time for teacher teams to meet by grade and subject three times per week, and offering after school tutoring, Kaplan test prep for the Scholastic Aptitude Test, (SAT), online courses through APEX, and Regents' preparation through Castle Learning. Evidences of this strategic use of resources results in offering students opportunities to enhance their learning. The principal also leverages the contributions of the various partnerships he has developed for the school. The partnership with the Theatre Development Fund allows students to see performances on Broadway and to be taught by teaching artists from the theater community. Additionally, the CUNY's City Tech Theater Technology Program provides interns to train the PATHS students at the school so they receive exposure to and development in careers in the theater industry.

- The school's performing arts program is the basis of students' voice and choice that permeates the school's culture, resulting in an environment that promotes respect, trust, and accountability, leading to higher student achievement. (1.4)
 - Teacher teams are responsible for groups of students who are well known to them. The school's partnership with Counseling in the Schools provides attendance outreach and the Mayor's Attendance Initiative provides four social workers who visit the homes of students to ensure that they and their parents are aware of the school's expectations around attendance. PATHS is home to the City's first Interagency Task Force allowing for the allocation of the City's resources to best meet students' youth development and academic needs and the needs of the students' families. Additionally, the school has a partnership with SLATE that provides Young Men Leadership Training where African American and Latino youths are challenged to rewrite the narrative of what it means to be Black or Hispanic in East New York while upperclassmen receive training in how to mentor the freshmen and sophomores. A staff mentoring program enables support staff members to be trained by Princeton University, resulting in them becoming confident in supporting three to four students around academic conversations. As a result of these initiatives, attendance increased from 77% to 83% and incidents decreased by 90%. The principal holds six town hall meetings per school year where expectations are delineated and students receive awards for progress, performance, and accomplishments, resulting in a culture where students are disciplined, respectful, and have a sense of belonging to a community of learners. Students are active on the student government and have many choices around enrolling in courses that range from advance placement or college courses, to which performance arts major to pursue, and/or in which performance to participate. This has resulted in students who are happy to be in school and who do not want to leave at the end of each school day.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine assessment practices to ensure that students routinely use rubrics to assess themselves and their peers so they take ownership of their learning and teachers make the appropriate instructional adjustments to meet students' needs. (2.2)
 - The schools' use of a variety of assessments and rubrics and a standards-based grading policy that looks at each student through an asset lens ensures that students receive actionable feedback. Teachers agree on the purpose of assessments given to students and that different assessments give different information. For example, teachers diagnose students' literacy skills with the Scantron Performance Series that provides the starting point for work in English language arts, science, and social studies classes. Teachers use 'take the temperature strategies' during the lesson to quickly check for understanding, and running records during student activity periods document student effort. Exit slips gauge how much students learned during a lesson so teachers know what needs to be re-taught the next day. Teachers administer mock Regents to assess how well the students are going to do on upcoming Regent exams and to identify areas that students still need help with before the exam. However, student use of rubrics to guide work product development or to self-assess how well they have performed on assignments is not yet an embedded practice, decreasing the students' ability to assess their own learning and that of their peers, thus limiting further improved outcomes.
- Ensure that feedback to teachers based on the Danielson Framework supports teacher development around the implementation of the Common Core instructional shifts so that teacher practice improves. (4.1)
 - The school is in its second year in the Teacher Effectiveness Pilot and as such uses the Danielson Framework to provide feedback to teachers to support the development of their practice. Each written observation report provides teachers with the evidence and rating of the standards of teaching of the Danielson Framework with emphasis on Designing Coherent Instruction, Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques, and Using Assessment in Instruction. Teachers receive feedback on their assessment practices, discussion techniques, and planning, and know their strengths and areas of challenge. However, teacher practice is not yet consistently including the instructional shifts that are the expectations of the Common Core Standards thereby hindering building teacher capacity around effective teaching strategies.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Performing Arts and Technology High School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?			X				
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?			X				
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?				X			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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				
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed