

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

High School for Civil Rights

High School 504

**400 Pennsylvania Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11236**

Principal: Michael Steele

Dates of review: January 12 - 13, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Linda Waite

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The High School for Civil Rights is a high school with 441 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 75% Black, 22% Hispanic, 1% Asian, less than 1% White and American Indian students and 1% not reported. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 81.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

This is a small theme-based high school that provides a calm, respectful and orderly environment supporting student and adult learning. The principal's vision of every student earning a Regent's diploma, graduating from college, and becoming an informed and involved citizen is well communicated; and is supported by all members of the school community. The school leadership team utilizes data effectively to align needs to goals, creating a well-focused Comprehensive Educational Plan that drives instruction and accelerates students' performance and progress. Parents, teachers and students feel valued and thus the school is developing a culture of mutual trust and respect. School leaders utilize observations and student outcomes to develop professional plans that foster professional growth and student learning. Teacher teams research and share instructional strategies to revise their practice and better meet student needs, although presently, there is no evaluation of teacher team or leadership capacity effectiveness.

The school offers a broad, rigorous curriculum including the arts, advanced placement courses and electives that challenge and prepare students for college level work. The principal's strategic use of budgetary and personnel resources provides technology in classrooms, double period literacy classes, and foundational science courses. Additionally, academic intervention programs, counseling programs and partnerships with the Liberty Program, New York University School of Law, and the High School Internship Technology provide a good level of academic and personal support to students and families.

Administrators use a wide range of data to monitor school level needs and to create academic interventions services to improve student-learning outcomes. Classroom teachers use a variety of assessments on a regular basis to develop content and skill-based goals, plan instruction, and evaluate and track students' progress. This is having a positive impact on student learning in all content areas. The school's good communication systems keep parents well informed of their children's progress. However, teachers and teacher teams do not have a uniform tracking tool to measure student performance and progress over time. Teacher teams do not consistently set long and short-term differentiated goals for students in need of additional support. Consequently, instruction does not always meet the needs of all students. Furthermore, teams are not administering interim-assessments on a regular basis, nor do they share assessment results with parents. This impedes academic growth and at-home support. School leaders have effective structures in place that allow them to self-monitor, review and modify practices in order to engage students in their own learning.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision that is communicated well, and is understood and supported by the school community, driving efforts to accelerate student learning.
 - School leaders effectively collect and analyze a wide variety of assessment data to establish a clear picture of school-wide needs. They share data with the school leadership team to ensure that goals align to school needs. As a result, the Comprehensive Educational Plan contains focused goals and action plans that address professional development, assessment, integration of technology, and the utilization of an interdisciplinary approach. This promotes student learning and progress.
 - The school shares goals with the school community utilizing various approaches. These include faculty conferences, parent-teacher association meetings, newsletters, parent coordinator sessions, student government and meetings conducted by the principal for students. Therefore, all members of the school community understand the vision and do their part to support the goals of the school and improve learning outcomes for students.
- Administrators and teachers use a wide range of data to monitor school level needs, student progress, plan instruction and create academic interventions that improve student outcomes.
 - The school uses a wide range of data, including attendance, suspension, scholarship, cohort, and classroom level assessments to monitor student performance and progress. As a result, there is an increase in attendance, and a decrease in suspensions, English language learners earn 11 plus credits, and students in the lowest third achieve a Level 3 on the integrated algebra Regents. The school's focus on aligning curriculum and standards to instruction, utilizing learning styles inventories, differentiating instruction and focusing on skill development, is having a positive impact on student learning in all content areas.
 - The school offers a variety of effective instructional programs including PM school, Saturday/Sunday Academy, credit recovery classes, and tutorials. All of these interventions provide the extra learning time students need to pass courses, Regents, and earn credits necessary to graduate from high school. Thus, the school's four-year graduation rate has increased by 20%, and the weighted graduation rate indicates that more students earn Regents and advanced Regents diplomas.
- School leaders effectively utilize budgetary and personnel resources to support school goals and student learning.
 - The principal's decision to purchase SMARTboards, provide double period literacy classes (Read 180), offer a foundational general science course prior to Living Environment, and programming an extended day tutorial during ninth period supports and accelerates student achievement. Additionally, the focus on aligning teachers' strengths to students' needs is responsible for the return of a dean to a full-time teaching position and assigning skillful teachers to teach Regents level courses. Decisions such as these are helping

students pass classes, and to make progress on Regents examinations, especially in math, and social studies.

- The funding of a full time United Federation of Teachers staff developer, and scheduling teachers for a common fifth period provides the time, guidance, and support necessary for professional growth. This, coupled with the principal's vision, is responsible for the faculty's development of a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best. Consequently, students are benefiting academically from teachers using assessment data to plan lessons, group students, and differentiate their instruction. Furthermore, students across grade levels and content areas are engaging in cooperative learning, and peer and self-evaluation, thus taking ownership for their learning.
- Teachers benefit from participating in professional collaborations that foster reflection, as well as providing options for research into effective instructional techniques.
 - School leaders utilize the observation process and student learning outcomes to develop a structured plan of professional development that fosters professional growth and student learning. Professional development opportunities include attending school-wide, network, and United Federation of Teachers centered workshops and inter-visitations to support teacher needs and support school goals. Teachers complete and submit self-evaluation surveys that allow them to reflect on their learning and revise their practice
 - Most teachers engage in grade, department and team collaborations using an inquiry approach to identify needs, and research instructional strategies to improve student achievement. In one collaboration, the tenth grade inquiry team is incorporating the use of context clues and the KIM vocabulary strategy (key word, information, mental picture) across the content areas to improve vocabulary, comprehension and writing. Portfolios reflect improvement in both reading and writing.
- School leaders have effective structures for school self-evaluation, review and modification of practice with a clear focus on improving student learning.
 - The school's on-going review of data results in modification of practice, teacher assignments and after-school programs with a focus on improving student learning and achievement.
 - The school leadership team is responsible for collaborative budgetary, organizational and instructional adjustments to the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan that supports students' learning needs on an ongoing basis.
- The school is a safe place where students feel valued, are engaged in learning and they appreciate the good level of support they receive for their academic and social development.
 - The school offers a clean, safe, nurturing environment that is conducive to learning. Bulletin boards displaying exemplary student work line the hallways celebrating students' success. Honor, merit, perfect attendance rolls and electronic message boards are strategically located to highlight student

performance. As a result, students feel valued, are motivated to learn, and challenge themselves to meet high expectations and succeed.

- The school's use of the Learning Environment Survey, Quality Review, open door policy, and student government meetings serve as a barometer that guides school and instructional improvements and gives voice to the school community, especially the students.

What the school needs to improve

- Evaluate systems for assessing students' performance and progress over time and for sharing assessment results with families.
 - Teacher teams use periodic assessments as a baseline to identify strengths, weaknesses and next steps, in terms of instructional practices. However, they do not administer interim assessments on a regular basis to measure the impact of instructional practices on student learning and progress. Additionally, they do not share assessment results with parents, thus impeding academic growth and familial support.
- Formalize the setting of long and interim differentiated goals for individual students or subgroups in need of additional support, by teacher teams.
 - Teacher team members set long-term goals such as "improve vocabulary from 4.6 to 6.6 by using context clues and graphic organizers" but they do not set short-term differentiated objectives for individual or sub-groups of students. Therefore, instruction does not always meet all students' needs.
- Develop a tracking tool that teachers or teacher teams can use to monitor student performance and progress over time.
 - Teachers use various methods of monitoring student progress including roll books, charts, and electronic grade books; however, there is no uniformity. Consequently, it is difficult for school leaders to monitor student performance trends over time.
- Use data regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies.
 - Teacher teams meet on a regular basis but school leaders do not review agendas, minutes or attend meetings to gain an understanding of the team's work. As a result, there is no evaluation of teacher team effectiveness and leadership development opportunities.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: High School for Civil Rights	△	▷	✓	+
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>	△	▷	✓	+
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
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			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>	△	▷	✓	+
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 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize 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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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				
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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					
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed