



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Wadleigh Secondary School for the Performing
and Visual Arts**

Public School 415

**215 West 114 Street
New York
NY 10026**

Principal: Karen Watts

Dates of review: May 9 - 10, 2007

Reviewer: Bruce Berry

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Wadleigh Secondary School for the Performing and Visual Arts has 822 students in grades 6 through 12. The ethnic breakdown is 65% Black and 35% Hispanic. There are 7% special education students and 6% English language learners.

All students are Title I eligible, well above peer and City schools. . The attendance figure for this academic year is 88.5% to date, above peer and City schools. As a performing and visual arts school, it has many programs in theater, dance, music, art, television and other related activities.

As an empowerment school, it has more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's good quality strategic leadership is having a positive impact on school improvement.
- The school uses the outcomes of periodic data well for tracking individual student progress.
- The school has good practices in place for servicing the needs of special education students and English language learners.
- Teachers work well in teams to plan curriculum, instruction and to support student progress.
- Instructional programs are well structured and provide high levels of engagement, challenge and interest for the students.
- The school is an orderly community and has a caring and respectful culture.
- Students have high praise for the quality of support they receive from the teachers and for the exciting curriculum opportunities available to them.
- Parents have great confidence in the school and are complementary about the wide range of opportunities the school provides for their children.
- The performing and visual arts program provides very high quality enrichment activities which enhance the students' academic and cultural experiences.
- There are good procedures in place which lead to high levels of student attendance.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop data systems to provide strategic oversight and monitoring of student progress at individual, classroom, grade and subject level.
- Continue to develop strategies for improving the impact of curriculum and instruction in order to accelerate student achievement in English language arts in grades 6 through 8.
- Further develop strategic management responsibility and accountability for accelerating the progress of students in grades 6 through 8.
- Continue to develop strategic practices for reviewing interim goals in order to monitor and evaluate progress in meeting long term goals and plans.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with well developed features.

The principal's good quality strategic leadership is having a positive impact on school improvement. The principal has an in depth knowledge of the progress the school has made over the past few years and of the needs of the school as it moves forward on its journey of improvement. The school has good graduation rates and a good success rate in Regents tests, with many students achieving college admission. Progress in mathematics in grades 6 through 8 is improving, but English language arts results in grades 6 through 8 are not improving. There is a very caring and respectful culture in the school and parents and teachers have high praise for the dedication of the staff and the range of opportunities available to the students. As an empowerment school, periodic data is effectively used to track progress of individual students and to plan interventions and support to improve their achievement. The high quality instruction provides pace, challenge, engagement and interest for the students in their learning. The performing and visual arts programs provide excellent enrichment opportunities for students to learn from and perform alongside professionals and to take part in high quality productions.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Outcomes of periodic data are used well for tracking individual student progress. At high school level, credit accumulation, Regents tests, scholarship reports and marking period outcomes are used to monitor the progress of individual students. Progress in Regents test passes is monitored and students take classes in areas where they have not yet passed. Outcomes for each class are reviewed at the end of each marking period. Graduation rates, Regents test successes and the number of students gaining college admissions has improved significantly over the past three years. Progress of middle school students is tracked by teachers in all classes and subjects. There has been an improvement in mathematics, with some grade 6 students being fast tracked into grade 7 work and some grade 7 students taking the Regents mathematics A test in one year. Princeton tests are also used to identify skill strand progress for individual and groups of students and teachers use the information to inform instruction.

The school has good practices in place for servicing the needs of special education students and English language learners, which is leading to good progress for the students. Special education students are supported in self contained classes and follow the gradecurriculum with adaptations to differentiate for their needs as identified in their individual education plan goals. Some students are taught in general education classes and are supported by the resource room teacher. All English language learners are in general education classes and two teachers provide push-in support in the content areas. Progress of ethnic groups is tracked using the outcomes of periodic assessments.

High performing students have opportunities to take Regents tests early, to take up to eight Regents tests, with Advanced Placement and honors courses providing good challenge and interest. Higher performing students in middle school are fast tracked into higher grade work and Regents tests. Guidance systems ensure that the students in foster care or in shelters have good support for their academic and social wellbeing. Comparison with other schools show it to be above peer schools and City schools in many of the categories, but in grades 6 through 8 is below other schools in English language arts and in annual one year progress. The school has a wealth of data on individual students, but has not, as yet, developed data systems to provide strategic oversight and monitoring of student progress at individual, classroom, grade and subject level.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The school provides opportunities for all staff to take part in a collaborative process in creating plans and goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan. The measurable whole school goals are challenging and are supported by very good action plans which outline the activities and timeframes for delivering plans and achieving goals. Each curriculum area has clear plans and measurable and challenging goals which appropriately focus on raising student achievement. Plans and goals focus on the performing and visual arts, which plays a major part in the lives of the students in the school. Very good programs support students in greatest need of improvement. Teachers identify areas in need of improvement for students through the analysis of the outcomes of periodic data. A range of support programs are used, including preparation Regents test classes for students not passing particular tests, resource room teaching, before and after school programs, Saturday academy and sessions of support from individual teachers.

High expectations are a very strong feature which runs through all the activities in the school. Teachers generate very high expectations and challenge for the students through instruction and through the excellent learning support they provide. The performing and visual arts program raises those expectations to an even higher dimension, with high quality performances from individuals and groups of students. Students encourage high expectations for one another as demonstrated by the excellent presentation, by senior to junior students, on personal medium and long term goal setting in order to be successful in school and gain a college placement. Parents have great confidence in the school and are complimentary about the wide range of opportunities the school provides for their children. They receive regular progress reports and are able to discuss academic and social issues at any time when necessary. The school community is driven by the plans and goals for improving achievement throughout the school. There has been a significant improvement in achievement and in the ambitions of the students over the past few years, which is fully recognized and supported by the views expressed by students and parents.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

Curriculum is appropriately planned to follow the mandated and State requirements. Middle school students have a foundation curriculum with high literacy content in all subjects. Students choose an arts subject, all of which follow a rigorous academic curriculum. High school students study four Regents subjects in grade 9 and many students go on to take up to eight Regents, with some taking Advanced Placement and honors courses. In the excellent arts program, external professional organizations provide opportunities for students to experience and participate in high quality activities leading to practical performance of professional standing. Teachers are accountable for planning and differentiating instruction in order to raise the achievement of students. Units of work are planned to include associated periodic assessments, including quizzes, tests and marking rubrics. The curriculum is regularly adjusted for groups and individuals in response to needs identified through the analysis of data. Budget, staffing and scheduling are used very well to support the improvement of student achievement. Teachers use laptop computers and integrated software programs to enhance the quality of and add variety to their instruction. The scheduling for the school is built around students’ identified needs and includes preparatory classes for Regents, electives, advanced diploma and honors classes. A full range of intervention services are providing very good support for students’ academic and social needs.

Instructional programs are well structured and provide high levels of engagement, challenge and interest for the students. The school uses the workshop model which includes clear learning objectives, timed mini-lessons and activities providing high levels of engagement and interest for students. Students have high praise for the quality of support they receive from their teachers and for the exciting curriculum opportunities available to them. There is a high level of respect and care shown to the students by all the staff of the school. Students provide good support for other students through the peer mentoring program. Students are confident in approaching and receiving support from any member of staff about any academic or social issue. Good procedures and rewards to encourage students are leading to high levels of attendance. Phone calls are automatically made to students’ homes if they are absent from school and the attendance team monitors student attendance and punctuality, with home visits and parent conferences used as appropriate.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

Very good staff selection procedures are in place in the school. The principal and other staff visit job fairs and potential candidates are invited to visit the school. Following meetings with coaches and staff from the subject area, they undergo an interview process, where their knowledge of curriculum, instruction, use of data and classroom management are investigated. The school also looks for teachers who have other performing and visual arts skills to add to their subject specific knowledge.

The professional development programs provide very good support for teachers in improving their curriculum knowledge, instructional practice and the use of data to improve

student outcomes. Common planning time provides a weekly opportunity for teachers to work with instructional coaches. Monthly department meetings provide other opportunities for development activities. Coaches push-in and provide individual support for teachers with model lessons, together with curriculum and instruction planning. Teachers attend national and regional professional development programs to enhance their subject and instructional expertise. The principal and other cabinet members make formal and informal lesson observations that are having a positive impact in respect of the high quality classroom practice in the school. Immediate feedback is given by conferencing with the teacher, written feedback or by e-mail and professional support is provided, where areas for development are identified.

Teachers work well in teams to plan curriculum, instruction and to support student progress. The various teams in the school provide good support for students' academic, social and cultural development. The cabinet, subject teams and achievement team work very well in coordinating the strategic planning of curriculum, the delivery of high quality instruction, the tracking of student progress and the planning of interventions for students in most need of improvement. The guidance team, the school based support team and attendance team provide very good academic and social support for all students. The principal is highly respected by all members of the school community. Students, parents and teachers recognize her very good leadership skills and her capacity to bring about further school improvement. The school is an orderly community and has a caring and respectful culture. Procedures are clear and followed by all the school community. There are many external and community based partnerships which are providing exceptional opportunities for the students to have high quality experiences within and beyond the curriculum. The performing and visual arts program provides very high quality enrichment activities which enhance the students' academic and cultural experiences.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has clear, challenging and measurable plans and goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan which focus on raising achievement in the school. Individual student and class achievement are monitored at the end of each marking period. There is good use of data at individual student, classroom and subject level. The school does not have strategic practices for integrating the progress data to create an overview for reviewing interim goals, in order to monitor and evaluate progress in meeting long term goals and plans. The school effectively reviews the progress of individual students at all levels and, when needed, provides intervention programs to support student progress and achievement. The school is reflective in looking at the outcomes of data and adjusting plans and goals. This is seen in the programs designed for individual students at different times of the year to meet their specific needs identified from the data. As a result of the outcomes of data, the school has recognized the need to further develop strategic management responsibility and accountability for accelerating the progress of students in grades 6 through 8. The school has an effective and collaborative planning cycle, with staff contributing to the production of the plans and goals. Staff review progress at the end of each marking period and adjust curriculum, instruction and individual students' programs to meet the needs identified from the data.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Wadleigh Secondary School for the Performing and Visual Arts (PS 415)		\emptyset	✓	+
Quality Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.		\emptyset	✓	+
1.1	The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2	The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 			X
1.3	The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* 		X	
1.4	Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.		\emptyset	✓	+
2.1	Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			X
2.2	Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			X
2.3	Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4	High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5	Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	