

New Day Academy

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Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

This is a new school created in partnership with Republicans Inc. Currently there are only 6th grade (53) and 9th grade (76) students in school. There are many more females (79) than males (50) with twice as many females than males in 9th grade. Just over half of the students are Black. The next largest group is Hispanic, with very small numbers of other races. Around 20% are special education students. Many of the students come from low income, single-parent homes with approximately 85% Title 1 Eligible.

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Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's leadership work well together complementing each other's strengths. They work in a very collaborative and supportive way and have a great commitment to the school, the students and each other,
- The staff shares a clear vision and commitment to independent learning.
- The well-developed professional development (PD) opportunities for staff result in strong commitment to the school's culture and strong professional bonds.
- The well-developed advisory system supports students' academic progress effectively.
- There are high expectations of students' personal independence and commitment, and the portfolio system of assessment encourages independent study skills that lead to college readiness.
- The curriculum for students with specific special need is well aligned to their needs producing good growth for these students who have previously experienced little success in their schooling.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a more informative recording system using formative data from reporting periods and any intermediate assessments linked to portfolio work that would allow targets to be set, students' progress to be tracked over the year and rewards to be awarded for quality as well as completion of tasks.
- Develop a curriculum overview, scope and sequence that will be flexible enough to grow with the school and create appropriate linkage between subjects and discrete skills needed by students.
- Devise and consistently implement a policy of rewards and sanctions, aimed at improving the behavior of those students who do not conform to the standards expected by the school.
- Continue to work on improving attendance.
- Implement the plans to improve the level of parental involvement in the life of the school.

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

As a new school there are many areas for development and refinement, which the leadership is fully aware of. However, there is a well-defined culture that is driven by the leadership and subscribed to by all teachers. Teachers are committed to the students and work hard to ensure their growth and independence. There is work to be done to develop better systems to measure, record and track students' progress, and to ensure all students subscribe fully to the school's expectations, values and culture.

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

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is overall underdeveloped.

As a new school there is only a limited amount of data regarding students' prior performance other than students' last assessments at 5th and 8th Grade. The available data shows that a significant minority is working well below grade level and have some difficulties with basic skills, particularly in mathematics. While there is some data from marking periods the amount of other useable data from this first year is understandably limited. The data that is available is shared openly with students and reported to parents accurately. However, it has not yet been interrogated to look for patterns and trends in performance across subjects or differences between different groups of students, for example, by gender or ethnicity. Furthermore, the system for detailed tracking of students' progress generally over time is at an early stage of development and is not consistent across the school. This prevents the school making comparisons between the progress of groups of students and across subjects that would allow growth to be tracked using formative data from reporting periods and intermediate assessments linked to on-going portfolio work. Neither does it allow teachers and students to set personal targets and measure growth, which would give both a better indication of the added value that they are giving to their performance.

Quality Statement 2: 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 proficient.

Most students arrive with performance below grade level and often with low self-esteem. The school is working successfully to improve these. The use of portfolio assessments across a number of subject projects is particularly effective but these have yet to be finalized for the end of the year. However, the advisory groups are small. Therefore teachers have good personal knowledge of students' attainment and some are very adept at guiding students. They use the opportunities presented by the advisory periods to have detailed discussions with students' about their performance and progress. They then

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produce helpful and supportive guidance to support students in doing their best. However, this is not always seen and sometimes discussions lack the sharpness and clarity needed to ensure the level of support given to some students closely matches their needs. Nevertheless, the quality of information, for example, in report cards is good and relationships with parents are strong. All parents receive progress reports, which along with the well supported parent teacher conferences give great opportunities to enlist their help in supporting their children and tackling any underperformance.

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

This area of the school's work is proficient.

There is a clear focus throughout the school on developing the whole student. There work done in relation to creating students' portfolios is proficient. This aspect of the school's work is effectively building students' confidence in their writing ability as well as their research skills, which are necessary for college readiness. There is an assessment system for these portfolios, devised by subject teachers. This system has its own rubrics and grading system to evaluate students' performance however there is no whole-school system for grading these. This limits the school in its ability to use the assessment system effectively as a tool for raising standards and improving rates of progress. Nevertheless, there are some effective methods in use that grade according to levels even though the calibration of these is not yet consistent. Although the system rewards students for completion of tasks there is not always a clear judgment on the quality of the work based on a set of rubrics that show the skills students need to reach the next level. Where the grading system scores students' work on a clearly defined scale, the quality of feedback is much better, enabling students to see where they need to make improvements. There is a need for commonly agreed system for awarding grade level points towards portfolio assessments that is transparent to students and can actively involve them in monitoring their own progress. While the school has created opportunities for teachers to share and calibrate students' work, which helps to come to a shared expectation, this needs further development. The introduction of these would also have the effect of giving students greater understanding of their own rate of progress and greater control over their own work and aspirations: very much in keeping with the school's philosophy.

The lack of data has meant that whole school or cohort analysis has been limited but where individual student's needs have been clearly identified then well thought out and well-developed strategies have been put in place to address these. This can be seen, for example, in the 'Academy' class set up by the teachers themselves, using their own time, to provide a more appropriate curriculum for a small number of students who had been held back at previous grade levels. Tracking their growth has shown this to be successful in raising performance, but even more so in improving confidence and self esteem – principles that are the foundation of the school's culture.

Attendance remains an issue for the school to address and a factor in the low performance of some of the students. While this has improved over the year and for many of the students, their attendance level is higher than it has been for some time; there is still a need to raise this generally across the whole school. While continuing to use the systems already in place, the school also needs to explore a further range of measures that not only reward good attendance as now, but also positively celebrate and reward improvements for individual students.

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Quality Statement 4: 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 overall proficient.

Although many of the staff are recently qualified, they have good subject knowledge and with support from the leadership and each other, are improving their classroom management abilities, although this still remains a challenge for some. They have a great commitment to the school, the students and each other. They work in a very collaborative way. The school's administration work well together complementing each other's strengths. There is a very clear and committed vision to independent learning, which is shared by the staff. Additionally, the leadership style of having a devolved cabinet system provides good professional development opportunities for all teachers.

There are many good opportunities for staff professional development that result in a strong commitment to the school's culture and strong professional and personal bonds. Regular retreats and weekly professional development means that teachers share ideas and have bonded well together as a team. However, the school is new and relatively small so there are only a small number of teachers employed. As a result there are few opportunities for collaborative planning other than across subjects such as ELA and humanities where there is more than one teacher in the subject faculty. It will be important to increase these opportunities as the school grows so that teachers across grade boundaries can share curriculum planning and further develop the scope and sequence across all subjects. More collaborative working would enable the school to develop a cohesive flexible curriculum overview that would grow with the school. Furthermore it would provide good opportunities for teachers to identify good linkage between subjects and discrete skills that students need. By working out a scope and sequence for all subjects it will be possible to show the skill progression between grades and the expectations for each level. This will then enable teachers to align their instruction more sharply to the needs of individuals or groups of students, especially through the portfolio work.

Quality Statement 5: 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 system for assessing and evaluating students' progress through the portfolios and report cards is proficient. The only data and information the school has at present comes from these as the main source. However, the school carried out entry assessments in essay writing and mathematics, which are due to be repeated very soon and will provide a measure of the value-added to students' performance. In addition to the marking period assessments there are a number of ways in which the school gathers additional information on performance such as the meetings between students and their advisor to review progress and performance from the data provided by subject teachers.

There is a well-developed and effective advisory system that supports students' work and performance. The positive impact of this can be seen from studying the progress of students and changes to their performance over time. From scrutinizing records and discussions it is clear how much benefit has come from this guidance and encouragement. A similar improvement can also be seen for those students in the "Academy" who have grown both in terms of academic performance and confidence.

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Other key observations

A strong focus is needed in developing approaches to change the attitudes of the significant minority of students who do not conform to the school's culture and expected standards of behaviour. These students enjoy the freedom and independence that the school encourages but are less clear about what this means in terms of their personal responsibility. The school's code of conduct is not sufficiently clearly stated and enforced consistently so that in all classes students receive the same messages about, for example, dress code and expectations. This is work in progress but needs to be developed through a system of applied rewards and sanctions which include the current systems, for example, detention, but this would also benefit from the creation of a 'safe room' as space becomes available. Planning is at an advanced stage to train and develop students in a system of mediation. This could also bring into greater prominence those students who do want to work hard and, for example, using the student governance, could help devise rules in conjunction with the staff and assist in the administration of these. This would give even greater strength where a system is by peer agreement and application, which would reinforce and further build on the school's culture.

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Part 4: Evaluation Criteria Grade Summary

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.	o	✓	+
<p>1.1 The school uses available data (e.g., diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, students work products, standards-based portfolios, attendance, descriptive review, security data, etc.) and generates its own to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of how well each student, classroom, grade level, and other important categories of students and the school are:</p> <p>(1) currently performing, and (2) progressing over time, on English Language Arts, mathematics, and other important academic subjects.</p> <p>Criteria for measuring student progress are “objective” when they are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards-based, • consistent across students, • capable of revealing progress or a lack of it over time and ways to close the gap between current and expected practice, <p>and when they allow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the performance of different students to be compared, and • learning activity to be broken down into component parts so strengths and weaknesses on each sub-activity may be identified. 	X		
<p>1.2 The school makes effective use of the data to assess the performance and progress of students by racial and ethnic groups, English Language Learners and special education students, and all other categories of interest to the school.</p> <p>{This criterion and the next are partially aspirational as of now. City and State Report Cards and Division of Accountability and Assessment reports provide only some of the necessary data. The NYC DOE will soon provide schools with fuller access to better data.}</p>	X		
<p>1.3 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, racial and ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.</p>	X		

Quality Statement 2: 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.	o	✓	+
<p>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 it develops plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.</p>	X		
<p>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 warranting attention.</p>		X	
<p>2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.</p>		X	
<p>2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. That information is central to setting reasonably challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.</p>		X	
<p>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</p>	X		

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Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	o	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with the school's high expectations and improvement plans and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals.		X	
3.2 Decisions about the use of teacher and student time are based on the organization of the day and week needed to inform teachers about each student's performance and next learning steps, set goals and plans for improved student learning, and implement and continuously improve plans for reaching stated goals.		X	
3.3 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.	X		
3.4 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.5 Teachers are accountable for student outcomes. 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	
3.6 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	
3.7 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
3.8 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.9 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	

Quality Statement 4: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	0	✓	+
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 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 Leaders, faculty, and staff share the same goals and frequently evaluate themselves, their interventions and each other's plans and interventions, including, when possible, by comparing outcomes across classrooms and schools. The school monitors its performance and tackles weaknesses. Even in areas where the school is successful, leadership is not complacent, but aims to improve further. The goal in all cases is to improve student and school performance and progress.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results and revision of plans takes place in teams.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.		X	
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed.		X	

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Quality Statement 5: 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.	o	✓	+
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 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 interim 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 each successive phase of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve students' academic outcomes.	X		