



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Monroe Academy for Visual Arts & Design

High School 692

**1300 Boynton Avenue
Bronx
NY 10472**

Principal: Richard J. Massel

Dates of review: November 13 - 14, 2007

Lead Reviewer: John Collings

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

Progress made since the last review

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

Monroe Academy for the Visual Arts and Design is a high school with 522 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 23% Black, 74.5% Hispanic, 1% White, 0.8% Asian, 0.2% Native American and 0.5% other students. The student body includes 15.3% English language learners and 12.8% special education students. Boys account for 57% and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 77.2%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 61% eligibility.

The school is housed in a building that contains three other high schools and an elementary school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The very clear vision and dynamism of the principal has been instrumental in significantly improving the performance of the school.
- There has been a very good focus on using performance data to structure the curriculum to meet students' needs.
- Improving performance has raised expectations and enabled students to have high aspirations.
- Students enjoy school because they think they are well taught, lessons are interesting, and they feel safe in an environment where they are respected.
- Attendance is improving because of good procedures the school has adopted.
- The school uses its budget very well to schedule classes to meet students' needs determined by an interpretation of the data.
- Parents are very supportive of the principal and teachers, and think the school has improved significantly.
- Students are well behaved in classes and involved in their learning because of the good quality instruction they receive.
- Good support services help parents and students to focus on student learning and improving their performance.
- Good partnerships support the academic and personal growth of students very well.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine the school goals to reflect the school's continued improvement, and ensure these can be articulated by the whole school community.
- Support teachers to use the very good data on student performance to identify precisely the progress of students, classes, subjects and the school.
- Make greater use of intervisitations and professional development to support teachers in differentiating instruction based on students' prior achievement.
- Continue the process of delegating responsibilities to members of the school other than the principal.
- Improve the breadth of the curriculum by reintroducing arts courses and making greater use of technology to support student learning.

Part 3: Main findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Since the appointment of the current principal, the school has improved significantly. It is no longer a school under registration review and is well on its way to no longer being a school in need of improvement. This has been due to the vision and drive of the principal to raise expectations in the school. This was achieved through reducing the range of subjects, making very good use of performance data, assigning students to classes designed to meet individual needs, and wherever necessary, creating new classes. This has resulted in significant improvements in performance. The school is now at a crossroads where it has met its initial goals to improve performance and avoided closure. Now it is in the process of establishing further goals for long term and ongoing improvement. These are being developed with the whole school community in order to create a shared vision that all can articulate.

The principal has used the budget very strategically to create a schedule where each student's academic needs are well met and their performance improved. However, the principal delegates too few responsibilities. This means that although he has a very good overview of the school, and knows students very well, he doesn't involve the rest of the staff sufficiently in developing the improvements.

There are good data systems in the school, these are used effectively to monitor performance and set academic goals. However, staff do not monitor progress as systematically. They are therefore less clear about the progress each student, class and grademakes from one year to the next. Targets, based on prior achievement are therefore not set for students and, as a result, teachers do not sufficiently differentiate their teaching to challenge all students fully.

Improvements in the school's performance brought about by better quality instruction have raised expectations. The higher expectations have helped to create a good climate for learning, and students now have higher aspirations. Students enjoy school because lessons are interesting and they feel safe in an environment where they are respected. Consequently attendance is improving. There is a very good range of support systems not only to support students, but also parents. The staff believe that in many cases the best way to assist students is by supporting the parents. Parents rate the school highly, particularly the principal who, "always gets back to you", and the teachers who care about their children. Students and parents would like a wider curriculum that includes a greater emphasis on the arts. However, the curriculum is already reasonably broad in other respects, and there are good opportunities for additional classes that support students' academic and personal development. There are good partnerships with outside agencies that encourage the academic and personal growth of students and contribute to involving and maintaining students' interest in school and learning.

The inquiry team has convened and met. It is currently reviewing the students to be involved, the exact nature of any intervention and how it is to be monitored.

There has been satisfactory progress since the last review. Although the principal still does not delegate sufficiently, there has been good progress on improving attendance, and some limited progress on supporting teachers to differentiate their instructions in classes, as well as involving students in setting their targets.

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 the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The staff employ very sophisticated data systems that they use very effectively to monitor student performance. However, they do not use the data effectively to monitor student progress. The systematic use of performance data enables students to be placed in the most appropriate classes so that they meet credit requirements to complete Regents examinations. Where there is a specific need, instruction is in very small classes. The performance of special education students is monitored very well, as are any differences in the performance of males and females. The performance of English language learners is carefully watched, particularly the performance of those English language learners who have tested out as proficient, but who are not yet fluent users of English. Teachers make very good use of the school's data to compare past performance with the present, their current performance against that of other schools. This work is exemplary and it is used very effectively to set performance goals for students, subject departments and the school. However, this data is not yet used to monitor students' progress. Consequently, teachers do not systematically differentiate their teaching to meet students' needs. They do not take proper account of their prior achievement, or set realistic short-term targets for each student and then monitor their progress towards them. The school's leadership is aware of this and is developing professional development to support teachers in using data more effectively.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Teachers do make good use of the school's data to set objectively measurable long-term performance goals for students, even though they not take their progress fully into account. These performance goals are clearly set out on the school's data system, and are shared with students and parents. Results are discussed with students and the time frames to meet these targets agreed. The performance of students, classes and subjects are also systematically monitored. Where common issues arise, these are addressed through additional support. Students in greatest need of improvement form part of the inquiry team intervention and monitoring process. Teachers are less clear about whole school goals even though these are being reviewed to reflect the improving performance of the school.

Expectations have risen significantly since the appointment of the current principal. The current expectation is that at least 80% of all students will have a full Regents pass in all subjects. Consequently, students now have higher aspirations; they are beginning to believe in themselves, behave well in classes and want to succeed. Those parents who are fully involved in the school also have high aspirations and are very supportive. However, not all parents are as involved in their child's education as the teachers would like. Nevertheless parent involvement is improving thanks to the good efforts of the parent coordinator parent. The school sends home performance report cards at the end of each marking period, but these do not contain information about student goals or their progress towards them.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The teachers have made radical changes to the curriculum in order to improve students' performance. They have created a curriculum that is securely based on performance data and the needs of the students. These needs are determined by reviewing what students still have to do to gain Regents examinations passes. As a result, students' performance has improved. However, this resulted in a reduction in the amount of arts available in the curriculum, which teachers now feel in a position to begin to expand as they refine their goals for the future. The school's leaders are aware that the amount and quality of technology used to support teaching and learning is limited. Nevertheless, overall the school's curriculum is broad. There is provision for a good range of additional classes in, for example, peer leadership, school and community service, student government and writing and art contests. There are prep classes, a performing arts club as well as campus wide opportunities for participation in sport.

Teachers are gradually becoming accustomed to the concept of being held accountable for the progress of students rather than just their performance. This change is not only improving the achievement of students in their classes, but also demonstrating that students make at least the equivalent of annual yearly progress. This means of accountability is being introduced through appropriate professional development. In order to improve student's progress, greater emphasis is being placed on planning differentiation into classes. Where this happens, the instruction shows a range of expectations based on students' prior achievement so all students are challenged at a higher level. This results in students finding classes interesting, enjoying learning, behaving well and feeling safe in the school. There is a climate of mutual respect both between students and teachers and students. This ensures students are well supported both academically and personally.

The school staff are now more rigorous in following up absences. There is support available for parents and students to enable them to improve their attendance. These changes are bringing about a gradual improvement in attendance.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Professional development now reflects the needs identified in the school. In the first year of the principal's appointment there was a very strong focus on developing the knowledge, understanding and skills teachers needed to improve student performance in Regent examinations. Since then, there has been an emphasis on special education and currently, on planning differentiated lessons, and making greater use of "smart boards".

There is an effective system of informal lesson observations. Teachers find these supportive and informative. Observations are increasingly focusing on how well classes are differentiated. Both lower-achieving and higher-achieving students are now beginning to learn more effectively and make better progress as a result of more challenging work. The opportunity for teachers to observe each other's classes through intervisitations is not systematic, and as a professional development tool it is not exploited sufficiently. Teachers new to the school are well supported by a mentor in the school. In addition to an external mentor, a mentor from within the school also supports teachers new to the profession.

There is a good range of support services. Apart from the counselors on the staff, the school also uses the services of, "Counseling in Schools" to meet the needs of students and parents. The school has good partnerships with organizations that support the academic and personal growth of students. These include, the "Montefiore Medical Center", the "Theatre Development Fund", writing and arts contests, and Saturday prep classes.

The school has very clear structures. Procedures are understood and consequently the school runs very smoothly with all knowing exactly what is expected of them.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

There have been significant improvements in all aspects of the school's work. The initial goals for the school have been exceeded and this is no longer a school under registration review. The developments are such that the school is well on the way to the next immediate goal of not being a school in need of improvement. Staff recognize therefore that they are at a turning point. They are systematically considering what their priorities are, and what the vision for the future of the school should look like. They are in the process of revising both the long-term goals and the short-term goals to support this vision.

To achieve this they are investigating how they can aggregate students' individual goals into whole school goals and develop systems that place far greater emphasis on student progress. They are considering, for example, modifications to the curriculum to include more art and exploring how to make greater use of technology in teaching so that it enhances students' learning. As the school improves, the leadership is introducing more professional development. This is aimed at helping teachers make greater use of differentiation in classes in order to improve student progress, particularly in literacy, so that it matches the performance in math.

The vision for the school is continually evolving. Areas for improvement are being discussed and becoming more formalized so they can be articulated more clearly and shared with the whole school community.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Monroe Academy for Visual Arts & Design	Δ	▶	✓	+	◇
Quality Score			X		

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▶	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?			X		
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?			X		
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?			X		
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?			X		
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?		X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X		

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▶	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?			X		
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?		X			
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X		

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▶	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?			X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?			X		
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▶	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?			X		
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?			X		
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?		X			
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?			X		
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X		

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	▶	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X		