



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

**Quality Review Report  
Office of Accountability  
2008-2009**

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**Frederick Douglass Academy**

**Middle-High School 499**

**2581 Adam Clayton Powell Junior Boulevard  
New York  
NY 10039**

**Principal: Dr Gregory M. Hodge**

**Dates of review: October 7 - 8, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: John Collings**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Frederick Douglass Academy is a middle-high school with 1417 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 72% Black, 26% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 91.1%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 55% eligibility.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

The Frederick Douglass Academy is a good school in which very high expectations are conveyed in a supportive climate of mutual trust, resulting in students having very positive attitudes towards learning. This is a result of the strong leadership of the principal and the very good liaison between parents and the school with parents being informed about their children's performance regularly. When a child falls behind or needs extending, parents are made fully aware, and in partnership with the school can be assured the student is being supported to make the best possible progress.

Data is used very well to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. It is also used well to make organizational decisions to ensure the curriculum is challenging, exciting, and appropriate to student needs. Regular reviews identify whether students are making effective progress. The school is able to respond very promptly to address the needs of individual or groups of students through use of a new system recently put in place. Good differentiated professional development supports teachers to ensure they have the skills and expertise to implement any curricular changes. However, the school does not always make more use of data and student self-assessment to identify whether students are making the best possible progress.

The curriculum is extremely broad and gives students many opportunities to take part in the arts, develop another language and extend their cultural awareness through visits to, for example, Europe and the Far East. However, the good practice of data analysis in some of the core subjects does not occur in a greater range of subjects.

Lessons are engaging and students concentrate well. There is a high level of respect between teachers and students, and between students. This results in students being able to take advantage of opportunities to make contributions and voice their opinions in a secure, challenging and stimulating learning environment. However, teachers make insufficient use of differentiation and a range of learning styles to meet the needs of all students to ensure they are fully challenged to make the best possible progress.

## Part 2: Overview

- The school analyzes a range of data to identify students' strengths and weaknesses in order to make organizational decisions to plan challenging work meeting student's needs.
- There is very good liaison between the school, parents and support services, which ensures high expectations are understood by all.
- The school provides many curricular opportunities to challenge students and extend their experiences, which enables them to perform well and become articulate mature adults.
- There is a high level of mutual trust resulting in very positive attitudes towards learning.
- Professional development is well planned and differentiated to meet teacher needs to ensure continuing improvement in classroom practice.
- Data is used very well to make strategic organizational decisions to respond promptly to student needs and is a central focus of the school.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Make greater use of data to increase differentiation in classes to meet the learning needs of students more closely and to set individual learning goals for students to enable them to achieve their full potential.
- Increase the range of subjects by which progress measures are used to assess and monitor student achievement.
- Improve the range of opportunities for inter-visitations between teachers to enable them to develop their range of teaching styles and strategies to developed differentiated instruction.
- Involve students in making greater use of self-assessment to help them identify for themselves what they need to do next to improve.

## Part 3: Main Findings

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

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school has a very good system for collecting and sharing data with students and parents. Since its recent introduction, particularly in the middle school, it has proved invaluable in monitoring student performance and enabling parents and students to identify grades received for assignments, homework completed and test scores. As a result of the system's success it is being extended to include a wider range of subjects beyond English language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. Data is updated frequently, often weekly, providing an up-to-date picture of each student's progress. The system also facilitates communication between parent and school. Thus, parents are well informed and able to communicate any concerns. Data is used effectively to make organizational changes very rapidly ensuring curriculum planning and school scheduling are modified to meet the needs of students.

The school monitors different groups of students very carefully. There has been particular success in raising the achievement of Black boys through careful monitoring. Due to the success of this initiative, the school has been awarded "The Schott Award for Excellence" in educating African-American students for having the highest percentage of African-American males in the country to graduate from high school. The school also monitors the progress of students for whom English is an additional language and those with special education needs.

Effective communication with students and parents about student learning needs and data leads to high expectations. For example, for the size of the school, it offers a very wide range of advanced placement courses with a high success rate. A significant number of students in grade 7 have already achieved Regents exams normally taken in grade 9. Students who do not make the grade at Level 3 are given an extensive program of support during the summer to ensure they reach this level before entering the next grade. The school's aim is to have 80-85% pass rate in Regents examinations and good progress is being made towards this goal.

**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.**

Students are set learning goals with clear expected outcomes in English language arts math, science, social studies and an increasing range of subjects. Progress towards

goals is carefully monitored through the school's tracking systems. Students are clear about what they have to do to improve and they have significant self-discipline in working hard to achieve targets. It is clear to parents and students, through the frequent updating of the computer system, whether students are meeting expectations. This continual emphasis on monitoring the progress towards student goals drives high expectations of behavior, attendance and academic performance. However, students' self-assessment is less well developed.

Teachers and parents are involved in school improvement planning. The senior leadership team continually reviews progress towards goals that have been set during monthly meetings or more frequently where necessary. Teachers are also involved through the weekly subject and team meetings. Data from the school's computerized record system is also being used increasingly to inform further developments and organizational decisions, and to revise goals. These strategies ensure the whole school community understands the school's goals and is committed to them.

**Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The school's higher achieving students are stimulated and challenged through a significant number of advanced placement courses. In the middle school, dance and chess are compulsory and students take Japanese or Latin. In the high school, art and music are compulsory. This very diverse and exciting curriculum results in academic success as well as winning many chess competitions and trophies in the performing arts and sports. This is supported through good staffing from within the school and external support. There is an extensive range of extracurricular activities and opportunities for older students to teach and support younger ones. The school runs many courses at the weekends such as photography and painting, plus academic support for weaker students through extra tutorials. The school provides a significant number of opportunities for students to visit a wide range of countries as diverse as Italy, France, China and Japan. As a result of this broad, stimulating and culturally diverse curriculum students have a very well rounded education enabling them to become articulate, mature adults with very positive attitudes towards learning.

Lessons are systematically planned and engage students' interest and commitment. Many lessons are challenging and the good interpersonal relationships between staff and students, and between students, enables constructive dialogue through which students are challenged and develop respect for each other's views. However, although some lessons are appropriately differentiated, this is not yet common practice across the school, although it is more frequently practiced in the middle schools than the high school. This is currently a professional development focus for the school.

The school utilizes the budget extremely well to provide the wide range of compulsory and optional courses. There is also an extremely wide range of supporting courses for students who are not making the progress expected. Many of these are through extensive links with universities and other institutions to support students after school and at weekends. There is a high level of mutual trust between parents, teachers and

students. This develops a very positive attitude towards learning in a safe and supportive environment with all students having high aspirations and making good progress both personally and academically.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

There is a strong climate of continual evaluation and revision of classroom practice, which results in students learning and performing well. The senior leadership team review data consistently to identify the progress of every group of students by class and grade in an increasing number of subjects. This information is used very systematically to identify which teachers may need support through classroom observations, peer observations as well as grade and subject team meetings. Teachers have professional development plans that are discussed frequently with the principal, assistant principal and coaches. Teachers needing support are given opportunities for professional development in the classroom with the support of coaches after-school and, where appropriate, at weekends. The effectiveness of professional development is reviewed weekly and adjusted to meet individual teachers' needs. Where necessary, inter-visitations provide useful opportunities for teachers not only to see practice within their own subject but also other disciplines and approaches. However, there is currently no systematic program to ensure this takes place.

There was a strong inquiry team that focused on students' progress in math in 2007-2008. The composition of the team is being revised for 2008-2009 as the focus has changed to increasing student progress in English language arts. There is a very clear plan for the future, which is very well communicated with parents. There is a very wide range of counseling services from within the school and outside agencies, supporting both parents and students in ensuring students are able to attend school, continue their learning and fulfill the high expectations endemic in the school

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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.**

Through continual reflection the school understands its strengths and weaknesses very clearly. Generally all those involved understand what the school stands for and what it is trying to achieve. The many systems to support academic, personal and professional growth are very well established, for example, grade book monitoring, principal interviews and grade and subject reviews. Greater use of computer systems is allowing the school to begin monitoring student outcomes across an increasing number of subjects more effectively.

As a result of monthly reviews, and more often where necessary, issues regarding teachers' instructional practice and/or the curriculum are addressed very promptly and goals are modified. Student goals increasingly inform whole school goals so that they

are based on realistic expectations of students. However, the school is still improving its technique to base student goals not only on their performance but also on their prior progress, and to include a wider range of subjects. Also, the use of this data to differentiate instruction to meet individual and group needs is not yet fully established throughout the school.

The school regularly uses a good range of resources to evaluate the effectiveness of the curricula and organizational decisions. A particular strength is the range of information coming from reviews, student work, staff and students, and monitoring progress through computer systems giving weekly feedback on student performance. This enables the senior leadership team to identify very quickly whether the curriculum and organization are effective, and to modify them if necessary, and check that they are focused on meeting the school's vision and the steps necessary to reach it.

# School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: Frederick Douglass Academy</b>	△	▷	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?				<b>X</b>
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

## DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DY0, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.</b>							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?				X			
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?		X					
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?				X			
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?				X			
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?			X				
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?				X			
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				X			
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?			X				
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?			X				
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?				X			
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>