



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Charles O. Dewey Middle School**

**Middle School 136  
4004 4th Avenue  
Brooklyn,  
New York 11232**

**Principal: Eric Sackler**

**Dates of review: April 18-19, 2007**

**Reviewer: Candido DeJesus**

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### Information about the school

The Charles O. Dewey school shares a physical plant with another middle school. There are currently 485 students in grades 6, 7, and 8. Special education pupils make up 19% of the population, while English language learners make up 27%. The ethnic breakdown of students is 89% Hispanic with 11% almost equally divided among Black, Asian and others. Approximately 85% are Title 1 eligible, higher than similar and City school averages. Student attendance at 91.1% is higher than City schools and about equal to similar schools.

At the time of this review the new principal had been in post less than six months.

### What the school does well

- The new principal is visionary, collaborative and has put in place a number of needed reforms with the support of the school community.
- There has been a great improvement in student discipline, morale and safety.
- The administration has implemented new and improved systems of accountability for students, teachers and staff members.
- The budget has been used efficiently to fund additional interventions for at risk pupils which support planning and improvement goals.
- Considerable time and resources have been allocated to a new school library that will function as the hub of the schools multimedia plans.
- The school has invested considerable resources to ensure that each classroom and lab will possess state of the art technology equipment.
- Students are polite, well behaved and demonstrate good work habits.

### What the school needs to improve

- Use student data more systematically to drive planning, instruction and interventions.
- Reduce the frequency of whole class lessons and provide more opportunity for differentiation of instruction to small groups and individual students.
- Make better use of student work folders and portfolios as evidence of student achievement.
- Make systemic the use and analysis of data collected from intervention activities and periodic assessments as they become available.
- Increase opportunities for parents to better support the academic improvement efforts of the school.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

**This is an undeveloped school with some proficient features.**

The Charles O. Dewey Middle School has recently undergone major changes to its leadership and organization. New leadership was installed less than 6 months ago. The new administration immediately embarked upon major changes in the way the school was organized using student data to drive its planning for improvement and instructional strategies. All the members of this school community have come together to support the reform efforts advocated by a visionary new principal.

The school has reorganized itself using models of best practices in administration, professional development and strategic planning tools for school improvement. There has been improvement in planning, team activities and instructional strategies. Programs have been revised, resources have been redirected to better meet needs, and morale has improved for teachers and students. The tone of the school has improved. The school is safer and the environment is more conducive to learning. Student suspensions have reduced dramatically and untoward occurrences have fallen 87% since new safety measures and student support services and interventions have been introduced.

### 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.**

The school takes advantage of all student data that is provided to it by the Department of Education while it also has learned to collate many sources of school generated data. The school uses established protocols to organize available data and has introduced a number of new accountability systems for all members of the school community. As a result of its data analysis the staff has a clear picture of student performance and progress. The school is able to demonstrate how it organizes and analyzes a wide range of important information on the learning of its students.

Particular attention is being paid to the large population of English language learners and students with special needs who are enrolled there. The school also monitors data concerning Hispanic families since they make up almost 90% of the student population. Interventions have been improved and new ones have been added.

The administration has documented how the staff has become proficient at making comparisons of its test data over the past few years and against other schools. Protocols demonstrate the new administration hold themselves and teachers accountable in comparing data across classes, grades and groups of students and use the information to understand what their students are capable of and to monitor student progress over time. The reform efforts recently implemented at this school have only recently begun. Staff await the results of new assessment outcomes for students in order to evaluate current

practices and make changes where needed. The school does not yet gather information on all categories of interest to ensure that results drive improvement efforts for all students.

**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 proficient.**

The new leadership at Charles O. Dewey Middle School recognizes the importance of using student data to drive instructional practices and interventions. Administrators, teachers and support staff collaborate efficiently to set measurable and periodic goals for their students in all content areas after closely examining student data and setting benchmarks for next learning steps. They understand, as they set timeframes and develop improvement plans, that they must measure immediate and long term student progress. The school has developed strong plans for student achievement based on its goals for overall school improvement and the success of each individual student. Goals are set for each class, grade, and group of students. There is, however, insufficient use of student work folders and portfolios as evidence of student achievement.

All students are now given the opportunity to attend extended day programs and many are taking advantage of this in high numbers before and after school. In addition the school is developing a particular focus on the large population of English language learners. The number of teachers with experience of teaching second language learners has grown significantly and they are highly valued. Pupil personnel services have also undergone growth and changes. The most successful teachers now have time made in their daily schedule for servicing at-risk students in small groups or individually. Support staff conveys high expectations to students and parents. The school recognizes the need for parents to be better informed and to be invited to strengthen parent-school relationships. Parent representatives themselves acknowledge the need to increase parent involvement.

**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 proficient.**

The school has improved its efforts and practices in aligning instruction with its focused plans for improvement of student achievement. New assessment systems have been implemented which generate meaningful interim information about student progress. Teachers are not yet sufficiently accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes although this situation is rapidly improving.

Instruction is not yet sufficiently differentiated to meet student need. The school acknowledges this and professional development activities has centered on strategies to increase the opportunities for differentiation in the classroom. The new administration has reduced class size below the average for middle school and used the budget efficiently to fund additional interventions for at risk students and assign more staff to work with those who are most at risk.

Teachers are expected to use data competently to drive instruction although this is not done systematically. Common preparation periods for teachers to plan and analyze data are now built into the weekly schedule. Students in need receive academic intervention services during the school day and in extended day activities that take place after school and on Saturdays. Enrichment and extra curricular activities have also been added to the extended school day. As an example, sports are scheduled before school begins as an incentive to students to arrive early and participate in a full day of learning. Considerable time and resources have been allocated to a new school library that will function as the hub of the schools multimedia plans. The administration has also invested heavily in technology that is being infused throughout the school and in every classroom. These new initiatives have helped make learning more engaging.

Students are happy and well behaved. Overall they feel respected and well taken care of by the school staff. Student attendance has risen above the averages of similar and City schools.

**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 undeveloped.**

Leaders, faculty and staff are now selected based on their commitment to use data to measure success in student achievement and school improvement plans. The school has learned to compare outcomes across classrooms and schools. Many of the teachers are new and are just learning how to evaluate their teaching methods and those of their colleagues. They have just begun to accumulate data from periodic assessments to assess the successes of new initiatives although the lack of data in the past hampers comparisons with previous practice.

The principal is a visible and supportive figure in the school often found visiting classrooms. He practices good strategies for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. He holds teachers accountable for using data to plan instruction and for periodically monitoring student performance. As part of professional development strategies, he ensures that teachers are assigned mentors from within the staff and visit each other's classroom to observe colleagues that are successfully improving student outcomes based on their use of student data. The most competent teachers model for their colleagues best practices that accelerate learning for students. The practice of reflecting on one's teaching methods has become common among teachers.

The school runs smoothly with few student suspensions and fewer untoward incidents occurring in the building. Safety and security have improved greatly over the last year. Support services are viewed as crucial to the school's plans for improvement and these have been strengthened, with the number of proven interventions increased. The school has redoubled its efforts to align all youth development efforts and support services around its stated academic goals. A number of these efforts are demonstrating improved academic and social development outcomes for students who participate in them. Those that do not contribute to student achievement or social development are being discontinued.

**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 undeveloped.**

This school's approach to planning and interventions has been effectively organized to include interim goals and periodic assessment of progress. Systems have been implemented to objectively measure whether the new plans for improvement are working.

The staff is using comparisons of student data within and across classrooms, grades, groups of students and other schools to decide programs and instruction. Although there is insufficient evidence to assess the effectiveness of newly implemented initiatives, a number of interim assessments are showing good results and the school has positioned itself well to act upon the upcoming data and make changes and revisions. The staff is committed to using successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning to drive future efforts and the distribution of resources. At present, however, the school does not make use of data collected from intervention activities and periodic assessments sufficiently quickly when they become available.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Charles O. Dewey Middle School (MS136)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>	X		

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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"> <li>each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>		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"> <li>ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students*</li> </ul>		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"> <li>all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>	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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		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.

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>		X	
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>	X		
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>	X		