



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Dyker Heights Intermediate School

Intermediate School 201

8010 12th Avenue

Brooklyn

NY 11228

Principal: Madeleine Brennan

Dates of review: January 8 – 9, 2007

Reviewer: Georgie Beasley

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Dyker Heights Intermediate School has 1800 students enrolled from grades 6 through 8. The school's population comprises 42% Asian Pacific Islander, 38% White, 18% Hispanic, 1.8% Black and 0.05% American Indian and Alaskan Native students. The proportion of English language learners is 6.8%. This is lower than in similar schools although a higher proportion than this has little or no English when they join the school at times other than at Grade 6. In total, 38 languages are spoken within the school.

The school is popular and more students want to come than there are places. As a result, the accommodation is crowded and the school uses the available space very creatively to accommodate the varied groups of learners and number of classes. Around 10% of the school's population is special education students. This is a smaller proportion than typically found in similar schools. The school does not receive Title 1 funding. The average attendance, at 94.6%, is above that of similar and city schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is very well respected by staff, students and parents who acknowledge that she runs a tight ship.
- Results have improved year on year in English language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages and social studies.
- The assistant principals, deans and coaches give very clear guidance on students' personal and academic development, and on how to improve instruction.
- Systems are well established and so the school runs smoothly with clear lines of communication and responsibility.
- All staff work effectively together as a team and make decisions that benefit students' personal and academic achievement and well being.
- The school uses data effectively to organize classes and choose programs that focus on accelerating progress.
- An extensive range of events and programs enrich students' social and educational experiences and effectively help students who need extra support to learn.
- Good personal and academic guidance enables individual students to make informed choices and be clear about how to improve.
- Goals for individual student's performance are shared with parents and data used to monitor performance and establish follow-up programs.
- Parents and support services give good support and add value to the school's work.

What the school needs to improve

- Implement more detailed analysis of the performance and progress of boys and girls achievement.
- Use the information to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction for these groups.
- Provide more opportunities for students to explain orally and in writing how they work out answers and solve problems in mathematics.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

The school sets itself high goals for student achievement. It is a place where every action taken and every decision made is for the benefit of students. The principal is very well regarded by staff, students, parents and the local community. They recognize and value her strong, purposeful and caring leadership and direction. She is very well supported by four very effective assistant principals who know the staff, students and parents extremely well.

All involved in the school have the same high level of commitment. Teachers and students are eager to come to school. Through a stringent committee structure, the principal, assistant principals, deans and coaches know the precise needs of each student, both socially and academically. There is a strong commitment and purposeful drive to help all students succeed by providing extra tutoring during lunchtimes, at the end of the day, and during the Saturday academies set up to support any student who wants to come. The students enjoy the challenges provided by the teachers, and most behave well and have good attitudes to all aspects of education. An extensive range of additional opportunities within the Visual Arts program and the many fairs and festivals that are held, enrich students' personal and educational experiences extremely well.

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 well developed.

The school collects an extensive range of data, which is shared with staff so they all have a clear understanding of what each student knows and is able to do. Records of regional and State test scores, regular assessments by teachers, and information from discussions in meetings are diligently collected. The data analysis is particularly well focused on how well individual students are doing and what the school needs to do to improve their performance even more, especially for those that have specific needs. The school compares how well students do grade by grade and class by class. The rigorous use of data has led to effective improvement and so results in City and State tests have improved steadily for the last few years. The school was disappointed in a drop in the number reaching level 4 in English language arts and mathematics at the end of grade 8 last year. This year's goals focus on re-establishing the school's previous strong position when compared with similar schools and its own past performance and the administration team diligently checks to make sure it is on track to reach them. Very few students are held over and about a third of students pass the Regents Exam in Earth science, mathematics and either Italian, Spanish and French and, as a result, many students successfully gain scholarships to schools of their choice.

The school constantly measures its performance and progress at regular team meetings. For example, the instructional team monitors the performance of all students in literacy and mathematics and the pupil personnel team monitors and reviews the progress of the most

vulnerable students, including special education students and English language learners. However, the school does not analyze the data by gender quite so well. For example, boys performed less well than girls in English and girls less well than boys in math and science. The school has not focused its evaluation of the impact of instruction on the achievement of these groups.

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

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

The school uses its data very effectively to set long-term organizational goals that are measured by each grade’s academic performance. The goals expect an annual increase on the previous year’s performance. The school then uses the data to organize its classes on an ability basis to aid teachers’ instructional planning. Ongoing and regular assessments are used to move students in or out of the classes to best suit their needs and to meet the goals. The school has a good number of superintendent’s classes and special progress enriched classes for students targeted to exceed the standards. This has raised the expectations of staff, students and parents and ensures that the school plans and caters for the needs of all students. The school goals are shared with all staff members so everyone is clear about their role in helping the school to achieve them. Parents are invited to talk about their children’s performance at formal meetings and many say that they value being able to come into school at other times to discuss any concerns they may have. Through individual conferencing with their teachers, most students are clear about their goals and what they need to do to reach them.

The performance of special education students and English language learners is tracked carefully and appropriate interventions are put in place. For example, special education and English as second language teachers support these students in their normal class and in a small class for both English and mathematics. This ‘push in and pull out’ system ensures good continuity in the students’ learning and enables them to learn alongside their peer group. The achievement of special education and lower grade level students or those at risk in other ways is discussed very effectively at grade conferences and other regular meetings, for example, the pupil personnel team, to ensure that the academic, social and physical needs of these students are being met.

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

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

All teachers understand the importance of using data when planning the curriculum and instruction. Individual student levels and test scores are clearly recorded and indicate how close students are to the previous or next level. This alerts teachers not only to those students who could be pushed on to higher levels but also those who are in danger of slipping back. Students know what their goals are and so they are ambitious to reach them and are clear about what they need to do to improve. A good number attend the extra tutoring sessions organised at lunchtimes, at the end of every day or on Saturday mornings. Work in class is differentiated appropriately and each student works towards

consolidating understanding and moving onto the next level. Careful scheduling and use of the budget and grants ensures that services are matched to need. The good level of paraprofessional support and additional support services enables those students most at risk of failure to join mainstream classes and activities for much of the time.

Student attendance and punctuality are always a high priority for the school. The strategies in place have seen high levels of attendance maintained over several years. The CHAMPS program at the start and end of some days encourages students to come to school on time and gives them good opportunities to develop a love of sport and to keep fit and healthy. Staff and students respect each other. Staff know each student's personal and academic needs well and this enables them to give relevant advice and support. Students feel they are able to talk to staff if they have a concern or need extra guidance.

The school has given a great deal of thought about how to excite and engage learning. An extensive range of additional activities take place during the year. These support students' personal, social and academic development extremely well. For example, every year a Shakespeare festival enables students to study and perform one of Shakespeare's plays, to design costumes, cook food and grow flowers of the period. The school is especially committed to making sure all students are included in curriculum enrichment activities. For example, in the recent science fair, judging categories included prizes for each grade and for special education students to ensure that all students have equal opportunity to be successful.

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

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

The school has high expectations of itself and its staff. Therefore when selecting staff, it chooses those who have a commitment to ensure that all students do as well as they can. Teachers work very closely together to plan and to measure and compare how well each student is doing and are open to advice and ideas as to how to make their instruction even better. Professional development is planned to make a real impact on students' performance. Currently the school is looking at ways to differentiate instruction further. Staff are just beginning to look more closely at how to track progress as well as performance. They are also considering how new knowledge, understanding and skills will be taught so as to build on each students' preferred learning style and consequently boost their progress even more. For example, the numbers of students achieving level 4 in last year's tests fell because they were required to explain how they worked out answers or solved the problems in math. This data is now being built into instruction so that students have more opportunities to talk to each other and to teachers about the strategies they used to reach a particular answer or solve a particular problem.

The principal, assistant principal and coaches regularly observe teaching and give feedback that leads directly to improving instruction even more. Teachers work together in teams to plan instruction to meet the varying needs of students in their classes. Teachers from support services are part of the team and use data from assessments to help special education students reach academic goals.

The school constantly reviews its practices to make sure the curriculum and instruction is relevant for all. Systems are well established and so the school runs smoothly. Staff are

clear about their responsibilities and lines of communication are clear. Partnerships with the local community are used regularly to support and enrich the curriculum.

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 well developed.

The school has comprehensive systems for making sure that every aspect of its work is checked regularly through a well organized committee structure. All students are discussed at some point within the structure. Assistant principals, guidance counselors and literacy and mathematics coaches discuss students' performance within and across classes with teachers at grade meetings. The information is then used to adjust instructional programs, if required, to ensure that students reach the levels that the school expects them to reach. The discussions are shared with the administration team who then check to see whether the actions outlined in subject plans or contained in the Comprehensive Education Plan need to be adjusted. The performance and progress of different ethnic groupings and boys' and girls' achievement are, however, not routinely discussed at present.

An analysis of each individual student's performance forms the basis of the school's evaluation of its work. The information feeds into the annual Comprehensive Education Plan and is used to identify the school goals for the coming year. The plan is divided into smaller action plans for every subject and aspect of the school's work. Each has goals that are measurable, agreed collaboratively and with clear timeframes. Discussions at cabinet and administration meetings are focused on up-to-date information to ensure that the goals are being met and to trigger any immediate revisions that are needed. The action plans are not yet checked so closely by other staff and so they refer to the process less often in meetings and when planning instruction.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

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| SCHOOL NAME: Dyker Heights Intermediate School IS 201 | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| Quality Score | | | X |

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| 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. | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, | | | X |
| 1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* | | | X |
| 1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* | | X | |
| 1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school. | | | X |
| Overall score for Quality Statement 1 | | | X |

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

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

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