



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Margaret S Douglas Intermediate School

Intermediate School 292

**301 Vermont Street
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: Everett Hughes

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Reviewer: Ken Bryan

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Margaret S. Douglas Intermediate School is a large middle school serving 887 students from 6th through 8th grade. The school's capacity stands at approximately 54% which is significantly lower than similar and City schools. The enrollment is continuing to rise. The school's ethnic composition is Black 64%, Hispanic 33%, Asian and others 1.7% and White, 1%. The proportion of students eligible for Title 1 funding is 76%, which is slightly lower than similar schools and the number of special education students is 9.2%. There are just 5.4% English language learner students, whose first language is Spanish. The student attendance rate is 87.4% which is well below similar and City-wide school averages. The school receives a small number of recent immigrant students from the Dominican Republic, Guyana and Jamaica.

The school's faculty consists of a large number of fully licensed teachers and there is a balance of recently qualified and more experienced staff. Intermediate School 292 is the only middle school in the district with a performing arts program integrated into the curriculum, offering dance, drama, instrumental and vocal music, and the visual and fine arts.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and his cabinet are highly respected, very visible and they demonstrate excellent academic and operational leadership.
- The school gathers and uses data extremely effectively to set challenging goals for individual students and groups within the school.
- Collaboration is an intrinsic feature of the school as it very successfully underpins effective professional development, rigorous curriculum planning and challenging goal setting.
- The teachers know and respect the students very well and they respond diligently to their academic and personal needs.
- The students are fully engaged, they are eager to learn and they are provided with a wide range of stimulating classroom and enrichment programs.
- The curriculum is very carefully and creatively planned to provide robust interdisciplinary instructional programs.
- The school runs particularly smoothly and it is a safe, well-organized oasis of calm, quiet, challenge and purpose.

What the school needs to improve

- Raise the levels of confidence and competence of the faculty in the use of differentiation.
- Use technology to store, present and interpret data at the strategic level.
- Work to fully engage the parents in the school leadership team and parent teacher association structures.
- Raise levels of student attendance through the use of additional specialist staff working in the community.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The Margaret S. Douglas Intermediate School is a safe and well organized learning community which strives to meet the needs of all its students. It uses data very effectively to set high expectations for both individuals and groups and goals are modified through a rigorous assessment process. The school's curriculum is well planned and it incorporates many interdisciplinary themes. The classrooms are well organized places and are very conducive to learning. The teachers are fully supported by well targeted professional development programs. The very effective cabinet supports the faculty by providing excellent professional guidance within a very collaborative environment. The teachers know and respect the students and they respond extremely well to their academic and personal needs.

The principal is highly respected by all members of the school community. He is constantly visible and accessible and provides excellent academic and instructional leadership. As a result, the school runs extremely smoothly and it represents a secure and orderly haven for all its children.

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 gathers and uses data extremely well for individual students, constituent groups within the school and for whole school goal setting. There is clear evidence that the principal, his cabinet and the faculty use the data extensively and systematically to differentiate learning and to set measurable and objective goals.

The principal and the cabinet rigorously scrutinize the data for trends and variations over time in relation to individual students, classes, grades and within and between content areas. Aggregated whole-school data is carefully compared with similar school and City-wide statistics to determine the degree of improvement. Intermediate School 292 is constantly challenging its performance in relation to past performance and other schools. However, the use of technology for data storage and analysis is limited.

At the classroom level, the faculty carefully and rigorously set challenging goals for individual students and short-term variations in performance are immediately addressed through one-to-one conferencing and formative assessments. The use of student portfolios is a very strong feature as it is the vehicle for 'grow and glow' discussions with the students. The school vigorously uses the data to identify specific groups within the school, including those 'at risk' students in immediate need of short- and medium- term improvement. The analysis of the item or raw score data for the level 2 students is very detailed and consistently used across the school. The school has developed robust

strategies for providing detailed data on its English language learners and it targets its cohort of students performing below grade level. Ethnicity is considered where provision is determined by English speaking proficiency. The school's gifted and talented program meets the needs of its highest achieving students through the provision of high school prep and Saturday academy programs.

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.

Intermediate School 292 very effectively sets goals through a systematic process involving all constituent members of the school. This high level of collaboration is a well established process. Challenging goals, based upon data, are set for individual students, classes, grades and content areas. The school rigorously sets demanding goals for system-wide improvement based upon time-related comparative data. Goals are well displayed around the school and these are linked to accompanying grade performance data. The school has an embedded culture of continuous school improvement based upon the available data. The faculty can clearly articulate the relationship between data and goal setting for individual students and the objective and measurable goals for groups of students. The learning objectives of special education students and English language learners are clearly set through the rigorous use of data. There is a very robust system for the identification and tracking of 'at risk' students in greatest need of improvement. There is a very determined approach to the improvement of 'hot-list' students using item analysis, with a considerable amount of effort and resources being afforded to students performing below grade level. The explicit and exacting goals for students within the gifted and talented program are expressed in a student-teacher contract. High expectations are shared and the school is developing a diverse and stimulating program to meet the needs of this group.

The school vigorously shares its high expectations with the parents through a mixture of meetings and other forms of communication. Consultations and other conversations with the parents are frequent and teachers use mailing and telephone calls to ensure that that student progress is fully articulated on a regular basis. The importance of clearly defined goals based upon a range of data lies at the heart of the school. High expectations are very well communicated to all members of the school community and they are frequently modified in accordance with new data. This is an intrinsic and embedded feature. The impact of this process can be demonstrated by the level of consistency across the school.

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.

The school can clearly demonstrate the links between data, the State standards and the mandated curriculum. Curriculum binders visibly show the integration of the mandated curriculum through the use of excellent interdisciplinary themes. The teaching of English language arts successfully incorporates aspects taken from the social studies curriculum

map and there are clear links between science and mathematics. Through constant evaluations by the assistant principals and the coaches, modifications to the program are rigorously applied and linked to the professional development program. A mixture of teacher-generated diagnostic, formative and summative data continually informs this process as the teachers are held highly accountable to provide differentiated instruction. The principal and his faculty are currently developing a more rigorous approach to differentiation as levels of confidence and competence increase. The faculty systematically uses reading scores and other interim raw score data to differentiate within heterogeneous grouped classes.

The principal and his cabinet assign the budget very creatively to meet the needs of the students and the teachers. The schedule is cleverly adjusted to meet the needs of special education students and English language learners through the successful use of small class sizes and extended day programs. The school's provision for extra programs, materials and other resources is exemplary. The allocation of a ninety-minute period for professional development is another example of excellent provision. Teachers are able to plan and review data collaboratively as a result of this initiative.

The students are fully engaged in the classroom and they are very self-motivated. They are consistently on-task, and when spoken to, they clearly articulate learning objectives, personal data and goals. The relationship between the faculty and the students is excellent. The teachers know the students very well and they successfully meet their personal and academic needs. The classrooms are consistently well organized and the excellent displays on the walls and in the hallways reflect care and accuracy.

The school actively challenges student absence and celebrates good attendance. Whilst the systems for monitoring and following-up poor attendance are rigorous and consistent, the school is exploring other means to challenge high absence rates through the use of family workers.

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 principal and his cabinet select highly qualified staff on the basis of their personality and their capacity for further professional development, which includes the potential to use data effectively. On arrival in the school, the cabinet and the coaches effectively introduce the new staff to the curriculum and data binders, reading and mathematics goals and lesson planning guidelines. These are examples of a thorough and rigorous induction program.

The principal is highly respected by all members of the school community and he clearly demonstrates the capacity to effect change within the school. He ensures that the school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis and that procedures are followed consistently and diligently.

Professional development is differentiated for all staff and the teachers' needs are determined by classroom data and the many frequent informal and formal observations by the principal, coaches and cabinet. The development of the school's interdisciplinary themes is an embedded part of this process. As a consequence of a very collaborative

approach to continuing professional development, peer- and self- evaluation is regular and linked to the support mechanisms involving coaches and outside agencies. All teachers are kept well informed of the school's goals and data, as they continually modify the programs and request further professional assistance. Through the use of arts consultants, the principal has creatively provided ninety minutes of professional development time each week for all staff. This time is effectively used for grade and content planning with the foci being data analysis and improvements to instruction.

The school has excellent relationships with external organizations which significantly enhance the education of the students. A theater company and various community based organizations provide significant support for the arts programs, to provide links with local elementary and high schools, and to help raise levels of student attendance.

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 proficient.

The school plans effectively within a clear cycle of goal setting and review based upon the continuous on-going gathering and analysis of data. The assistant principals and the coaches meet each week to evaluate the data provided by the faculty and from the numerous walkthroughs. The cabinet meetings are very powerful conferences where modifications and revisions of the school's goals occur on a regular basis, based upon interim assessments. Comparisons are made leading to modifications of the plans and goals. An example of this rigor is the way in which item and unit analyses result in differentiated approaches to teaching. Good examples of this flexibility are modifications to the bi-lingual programs, the planning of writing in special education classes and the choice of novels for the English language arts.

The school self-evaluation process is developing through the establishment of a clear schedule of review involving the school's stakeholders. However, the parents are not yet fully engaged in this process and the structure of the school leadership team requires further development. Medium- and long-term goals are revisited monthly by the school leadership team who modify the Comprehensive Education Plan. This is a living and constantly modified document, which is continually and collaboratively informed by the available data from the classrooms. Strengths are identified and weaknesses prioritized by this process and the cabinet disseminates information for constituent groups within the school. The outcomes of this process drive successive phases of school improvement planning.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Margaret S Douglas Intermediate School (IS 292)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score			X

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.

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

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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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	