



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The School for the Gifted and Talented

Intermediate School 392

**104 Sutter Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11212**

Principal: Shirley Wheeler-Massey

Dates of review: May 14 - 15, 2007

Reviewer: Maggie Hollingsworth

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The School for the Gifted and Talented is an Intermediate School located in East Brooklyn, with 292 students enrolled in Grades 5 through 8. The ethnic make up of students shows that 86.7% are Black, 12.3% are Hispanic and 1% are from other groups. Sixty five percent of students are female and 35% are male. Below 5% of the enrolment are special education students, which is much lower than similar schools and schools City wide. No students are English language learners. Eighty five percent of students attract Title 1 funding which is almost two thirds higher than in similar schools and considerably higher than for City schools as a whole. At almost 96%, attendance is higher than in similar schools and City schools. Suspensions have been negligible throughout the lifetime of the school and are much lower than in similar schools.

Two aspiring principals from the Leadership College are assigned to support the school this year.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school provides a well-ordered, safe and secure environment for learning.
- The curriculum is enriched by visits and trips which engage the students' interest and spark their imagination.
- Faculty collects a wide range of data about student achievement which they use to understand how students are performing and adapt their teaching to students' needs.
- Lesson plans are detailed and always include a variety of activities which engage most students and help them progress.
- Teachers use a good range of academic interventions to support the students in most need.
- Senior managers monitor classroom instruction closely and use their observations to improve teaching.
- The school has a wide-ranging program of professional development that enables teachers to learn from each other and from outside experts.
- High quality display in hallways and classrooms sets a good example and raises students' expectations.
- The school keeps parents well informed about its work and about their children's progress and, in return, parents give the school very good support.

What the school needs to improve

- Define short term objectives, actions and timeframes in plans.
- Use periodic assessments and benchmarks when tracking and recording students' progress.
- Make a closer analysis of differences in achievement by gender and act on the findings.
- Involve more students, especially boys, in collaborative, participative learning.
- Expect even more of students and set suitably challenging targets for the highest achievers.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The school provides a well-ordered environment for learning and encourages a culture of hard work among its students. The school's very good examination results testify to its success in producing academically able students. Parents share the school's aspirations for the students and give the school a high level of support.

The teachers care greatly for the students' progress and work hard to provide lessons that are well structured, carefully planned and have a variety of activities. There is good use of arts infusion, educational trips and visits to enliven the curriculum. The students appreciate the care they receive and the range of help and support that is available to improve their achievement.

The principal is well respected, ensures that the school runs smoothly and that expectations of work and behavior are high. Through frequent observations, the administration has gained a good understanding of strengths in teaching and areas for development. Short-term planning takes into account data on student achievement so that curricula and lesson plans are well aligned to need, especially of the most in need students. Teachers benefit from a good range of professional development opportunities that focus on issues identified by data and classroom observations and are aligned to the school's plans. Instructional staff monitor data effectively to track students' achievement and progress over time.

The school still has work to do in ensuring that its plans are suitably defined with objectives, actions and timeframes, providing greater challenge for its higher achievers and in analyzing its data more closely in respect of boys.

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.

Intermediate School 392 collects a wide range of data about student achievement from formal tests and from its own in-house testing program. Faculty uses this data well to understand how students are performing and to decide on what is needed to help them improve. Teachers assess students' work carefully and give students' feedback on how it can be improved. They track students' progress regularly and record individual achievement in assessment binders which are running records of results of regular assessments, State and City tests, projects and quizzes. They frequently share this information, both formally and informally, with each other, comparing progress of students in different subjects to ensure that their interventions compliment each other. Administrators use the information periodically to understand how the school is performing in relation to other schools and to monitor the different performances of grades and subjects, including the performance of special education students. They do not, however, analyze information sufficiently deeply to identify underlying patterns and trends, for

example, in which groups of students make the best progress and whether higher achievers are improving at a fast enough rate.

The school has used data proficiently to identify 15 students, now in grade 8, who underperformed in end of year state tests and on whom it needed to focus. By collecting and analyzing the data over time and in each subject, administrators were able to identify and provide appropriate academic interventions. Teachers have also undertaken an analysis of achievement in State tests by ethnicity and understand how groups perform in relation to each other. However, the school has not yet matched this with a detailed analysis of performance by gender.

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 school’s mission and its underlying goals are understood by the whole school community. High expectations pervade the school’s culture. Everyone understands the need for students to get the most out of school. The students do their best to live up to the requirements to work hard, achieve highly and behave well. There are uniformly high expectations of how students should present their work and good quality displays in each classroom. Parents are very supportive of the school’s culture and appreciate the high level of involvement that the school expects of them.

Teachers plan work based on the wealth of information they have about each student. Making good use of common planning time, they meet and plan programs of study and lessons together and compare notes, focusing on individual students’ progress. Longer-term goals relate to students’ success in end of year tests; to this end the staff review and analyze interim test results, using detailed item analysis to determine which areas of work need to be revisited or what form of additional intervention should be provided to remediate the problem to enable the student to achieve the level required. In grade 8, for example, where the analysis showed that drawing conclusions and making inferences were weaknesses in English, the teachers reviewed the curriculum to cover the topic again and improve the students’ performance in these areas. The school uses its very detailed information on the scale scores for students in the greatest need to set precise short-term goals to make up the shortfall, but for other students this is less well developed and there is no similar challenge for the most able. Although teachers frequently reassess students’ achievement, they do not set measurable interim goals against which to benchmark progress. While the Comprehensive Education Plan is regularly reviewed by school leaders, a similar shortage of measurable objectives, actions and timeframes makes it difficult to assess progress on the school’s overall goals throughout the year.

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 curriculum complies with mandatory requirements but is enriched by trips and visits and by connections to visual and dramatic arts. For example students had recently taken

pictures of Brooklyn architecture with a Greek influence and had sketched and written about their findings, integrating art, social studies and English. The students enjoy this 'hands on' learning because it allows them to use their imagination and personal research. Most classroom teaching provides a variety of activities in well planned lessons that interest the majority of students and promote good achievement, although some lessons do not afford higher achievers the opportunity to think and learn for themselves through personal research. Overall there is too little focus on securing greater involvement of boys in collaborative group activities where they are often in the minority and are sidelined by more confident, articulate girls. Special education students and others who have fallen behind are supported well by the range of academic interventions that the school provides.

The principal has suitably aligned the schedule to enable teachers to plan the curriculum together, share instructional strategies and to visit each other's classrooms. Students have benefited from teachers' shared understanding of their needs and from the close network of support that results. Additional preparatory courses for high school have recently been added to after school provision to ensure that students are prepared for the rigor of specialist high school tests. Staffing is aligned to students' needs within the constraints of the budget, for example, by providing specialist art instruction that is a key element of project and theme based work and, next year, by providing an additional science teacher to increase the amount of taught time for science to improve results. Parents appreciate that teachers often give up their own time to provide support for their children and say that the school is 'like one big family'. Students have confidence in their teachers and know where to go for help if they need it. Communication between home and school is good and parents understand the need to support their children. The students have good attendance but, when absence occurs, it is followed up quickly.

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 proficient.

The school selects staff carefully, often on the recommendation of existing teachers, which ensures that prospective teachers understand the principal's firm commitment to expecting high standards from students. The school community respect the principal for her open door approach and because she is a visible presence in the school. The staff work together to promote the school's values and to ensure that the school runs smoothly. Students behave well and feel safe and secure. With her administrative team, this year supplemented by two aspiring principals, the principal has monitored classroom teaching regularly both by formal observations and by more frequent informal visits. Teachers welcome these observations for the unobtrusive practical advice they receive on, for example, how to adjust the pace or timing of a mini lesson. Administrators, parents and staff meet together periodically to share information about the school's progress towards its goals and to review and update the Comprehensive Education Plan.

The range of professional development is good. Teachers' collaborative approach to sharing information ensures that Teachers' College courses and those led by visiting facilitators, have high impact. Teachers benefit greatly from the visits they make to each other's classrooms, from modeling lessons for each other, from the discussions they have on what makes good teaching and assessment and from their collaboration on how to use data to decide the next steps for students.

Students benefit from the school's good relationships with a small number of partners for arts based activities. The school is establishing a reputation for high achievement with prestigious high schools and encourages its students take advantage of this by aiming high.

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.

Instructional staff and administrators analyze data on student achievement to ensure that the students are on track to achieve their goals, and adjust their teaching where their analysis shows this is needed. They share information about students freely in teams so that they can compare the performance of students between classes and grades and from cohort to cohort. The administration uses this information effectively to support and challenge teachers and to improve instructional quality.

The Comprehensive Education Plan outlines the annual goals and contains detailed objectives for each subject area. Targets are based on improvements in scale scores and indicate what steps will be taken during the year to achieve them, but without suitable stepping stones and timeframes that would enable the school to see more clearly how far it has reached along the way at interim periods. While the school knows that its performance as a whole is higher than other schools and has analyzed students' achievement in English and mathematics in some detail, the differential achievement of, for example, boys and girls, and students' underperformance in social studies and science, have not been addressed in sufficient detail.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Waverly School For the Arts (IS 392)	∅	✓	+
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.	∅	✓	+
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			
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	