



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Salome Urena de Henriquez School

Intermediate School 218

**4600 Broadway
New York
NY 10040**

Principal: June Barnett

Dates of review: December 4 - 6, 2006

Reviewer: Ronnie Solow

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Salome Urena de Henriquez Intermediate School is located in Washington Heights. The school serves students in grades 6 through 8 and educates 586 students, including nearly 4% special education students and 204 (35%) English language learners. The school serves a population comprised largely of students from the Dominican Republic. The remaining 4% of the students are mainly from other Hispanic countries such as Mexico, Ecuador, and Peru. The school receives Title 1 funding. Attendance falls slightly below 90% and is slightly better than similar and City schools.

The school is one of three small schools on the same site that share the library, auditorium, gymnasium and lunchroom spaces. A new principal was assigned in April, 2005.

Also housed on the campus is Children's Aid Society, the community based organization that has been a partner in the school since it opened in 1994. This non-profit organization works to support the school's students and families by operating a medical and a dental health clinic, as well as an after-school program that includes homework and recreational activities. Many of the teachers are also employed in the after-school educational programs. These services are provided by social workers and mental health counsellors, to supplement the mental health services that the school provides to the students and their families. Other community-based activities include providing evening classes to young adults and the parents of students. The medical staff supports the school by providing immunizations and other medical examinations.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders work collaboratively and support one another to implement the instructional goals of the school.
- Well-defined policies and procedures are known by staff, students and parents.
- The principal understands data and its use to improve learning outcomes.
- The school and its partner, the Children's Aid Society, provide a wide range of academic, social, medical, and mental health services to the students and the community.
- The principal recognizes the needs of the staff and provides extensive professional development opportunities.
- The principal and the other two principals in the building are collaborative, supportive and assist one another.
- The principal recognizes the needs of her students.
- The principal is highly visible throughout the building.
- Students appreciate the efforts of the teachers and administration.
- The building is well maintained and decorated with student work samples.

What the school needs to improve

- Analyze further the comparative performance between the school and other schools in order to identify trends in the school's effectiveness.
- Ensure consistency in teachers' assessment of students' progress, and in their use of this data to differentiate learning for individuals and groups of students.
- Ensure that plans have measurable interim goals so that progress towards them can be measured and adjustments made in response to new information.
- Raise the expectations of all staff for all students and convey these high expectations to the students and their parents.
- Provide time for staff to visit one another's classrooms, and learn from one another in order to improve the quality of instruction.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

A new principal was assigned in April 2005. Formerly an assistant principal at Intermediate School 218, she is striving to make a difference and raise the achievement level of her students. The principal, assistant principals and the instructional leadership team are adept in their understanding and use of data. These skills are steadily being filtered down to staff, many of whom are inexperienced. Consequently, although the school is at an early stage of data-driven instruction, a good range of initiatives has been introduced which have the potential to secure further improvement.

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 principal and the members of the instructional leadership team examine English language arts results from State and City tests, the Princeton Assessments, English language assessments, and teacher-made tests to assess the needs of the student body. All teachers receive the data for their class in the form of a bar graph with class scale scores and levels for each child. This picture of the strengths and weaknesses is intended to serve as the basis for the differentiation of instruction in every subject class and to help the teaching staff to adjust the curriculum as necessary. Progress is measured by means of teacher-made tests and materials, journals, conference notes, running records, as well as formal assessments and the data binders that are kept in each class. The school recognizes that the use that is made of this information remains inconsistent and has appropriate plans in place to address this issue.

Data is discussed at the weekly curriculum planning sessions held by subject teachers. Common lesson planning, tests and student results are topics for discussion. Teachers in the bilingual program constantly assess the students' growth in English, using the English Language Assessment Program and the State results, to make adjustments in the teaching and learning process. The pupil personnel team follows up with the academic intervention coordinator to monitor the interventions that have been instituted.

The school does not currently compare the school's performance with that of similar schools nor are comparisons with past performance of the school made. Although assessment information is available, at present the school does not use data sufficiently to measure progress among grade levels, academic subject areas or other groupings within the school. This area has been identified as an area for professional development by the principal. At the same time, she is moving to further develop data-driven decision making, the workshop model and differentiated instruction through professional development. The principal, assistant principals and deans monitor attendance and incident data effectively.

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 has made a good start in using its data to plan instruction. Set intervals of assessments and the follow-up strategies are instituted as an outcome of data review. For example, English language arts results indicated that the student body was severely deficient in vocabulary acquisition. As a result, English language learners and bilingual students, as well as monolingual students, are placed in tutoring programs designed to meet their needs. Ninety minute blocks of time in English language arts and mathematics allow for intensive instruction in these targeted areas. The school recognizes that not all teaching staff have developed strategies or the skills to modify classroom practices using the latest available data given to them. The materials given to the staff in their data binders have been helpful in assisting classroom and support teachers in understanding the success of their daily work with the class.

There is an appropriate range of support in place for special education students and English language learners which demonstrate the school's commitment to securing improvement for its lowest achieving students. At present, there is insufficient emphasis on improving the performance of higher attaining students. Academic intervention services work with a targeted list of level 1 and level 2 students who are struggling and who are in danger of having to repeat the grade. Goals for improvement are derived from the analyses of students' achievement across the school in grades, classes and, to a lesser extent, across subjects. After school and Saturday programs are in place to support both these students and the small cadre of level 3 students. A test preparation program for these students runs in the Saturday program. While this assistance has the potential to move them up to the next level of skill, and reflects the school's high expectations of its students, it is as yet too soon to see the impact on test results.

The school works hard to reach out to parents, with English as a Second Language classes and bilingual workshops to explain curriculum programs, as well as formal information-giving sessions. Teachers also contact homes where there are problems to feed back to parents. During parent-teacher conferences and parent association meetings, high expectations are shared with the participants. The school also works with the parents of students causing concern. For example, after monitoring of report cards, a number of students were identified for excessive absence, lateness or failure. Parent conferences were held and interventions put in place. As a result, all partners are involved at appropriate levels in developing students' learning.

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's budget is managed effectively in response to identified students' needs. For example, through a specific grant, extensive professional development and consultant services have been purchased to support the teaching staff, while programs and resources have been purchased in response to the analysis of data.. In response to data analysis, academic intervention services have been increased for students with English as a second language and literacy, and a comprehensive school reform coordinator position was added

to help support the teachers. These initiatives have had a positive impact on students' learning.

While there is evidence that teachers' confidence in using assessment information is improving, the school knows that this is not yet consistent among all staff and across subjects. For example, while some English language arts min-lessons are based on an accurate assessment of students' starting points, there is not yet consistent use of guided small group instruction in lessons. In a similar way, the same tasks are often undertaken by the whole class with the result that students occasionally report that the work is too easy for them. However, there is evidence that students are keen to learn and concentrate well in lessons. Because of the high profile given to professional development, the principal and the instructional leadership team are effectively providing assistance for staff in recognizing the need to plan tasks that meet the needs of all students.

The budget has been effectively used in securing extra resources, for example to support learning in social studies. Staff, particularly those in senior management positions, are given roles that reflect their expertise, while the school's schedule for instruction and extension activities reflects needs that are accurately identified from data.

The use of data, developing teaching skills through the use of the workshop model, and differentiating instruction for the students are not yet consistently seen in all lessons but improvements that have already been put in place demonstrate the capacity for continued development. The introduction of data binders, training in their use, and in the impact of data on grade level meetings has improved had a positive effect on teachers' accountability for their students' learning. Most staff are committed to their students and to their own development and, as a result are developing in confidence in differentiating instruction appropriately. Despite remaining inconsistencies in this, students nonetheless feel supported and say that problems are resolved readily, should they occur.

Parents confirm these efforts and reiterate that the school climate is much improved under this principal. The school closely monitors attendance and latecomers receive phone calls home and a Saturday detention session at school. As a result of these appropriately applied systems, student attendance has improved and is about equal to that seen in schools across the City.

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.

Since the principal's appointment, she has demonstrated a strong commitment to securing improvement by ensuring a high quality of teaching staff. At the same time, she has not been shy of taking hard decisions, should the need arise. New teachers are hired for both academic expertise and personal attributes. While many are inexperienced, the school has appropriate procedures in place to secure improvement and development; for example, in the strategy of pairing new teachers with more experienced ones to support them in understanding their role and the school's procedures. Through professional development, data is better understood as an important aspect of classroom planning through focused work on the adaptation and modification of classroom strategies based on the information gathered from all assessment results. Teachers have received extensive and intensive professional development in their curriculum areas in the use of the workshop model, America's Choice School Design, and other programs. Coaches and the

principal demonstrate teaching strategies and provide mini-demonstration lessons for less experienced staff.

The principal and assistant principals observe lessons regularly on a formal and informal basis. During weekly grade planning meetings, curriculum and materials are regularly discussed. At present, there is less emphasis on developing practice through strategies of intervisitations within school or in other schools.

The principal has instituted practices to ensure the smooth operation of the school. She has created helpful guidance for staff, parents and students, and provided paid summer training for the new members of the staff, which has assisted their induction. A daily staff bulletin is prepared and parents receive frequent notifications by backpack and mail. Parents speak of the improved tone of the school and discipline under the leadership of the principal. While some teachers have concerns about continuing behavior issues, the school has put measures in place to build tone and maintain order. Hallways are patrolled, and the principal and assistant principals are visible in the halls, the stairwells, and outside the building at arrival and dismissal times. These strategies are increasingly effective.

The Children's Aid Society, the social service partner housed in the school, supports the school with an after-school program in homework help, sports and dance, and social skills training. These services and those provided to the community make the school an important community resource. In addition to the Children's Aid Society, the school has relationships with Learning Leaders, New York Restoration Project, Columbia University, New York University, and the local police precinct.

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.

The school leadership team and the instructional leadership team involved a number of constituents in the creation of the Comprehensive Education Plan, outlining the goals and objectives for the school. Despite setting goals for improved outcomes, strategies to deliver this improved progress have not yet resulted in raising achievement. The document does not include interim measures for attaining the outlined goals and staff do not use it to adjust classroom practice.

The goals of the Comprehensive Educational Plan have been outlined but meeting them will be an arduous task. The principal consistently stresses the need for performance to increase beyond level 2 but definitive measures to insure achieving this goal have not been formalized. Some staff are not yet fully behind these expectations. Some teachers continue to focus on classroom management issues in a way that places blame for the lack of achievement on others, not the school. Despite the best efforts of the principal, other school leaders and some staff, there is a long way to go before the school is truly effective.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Salome Urena de Henriquez (IS 218M)	∅	✓	+
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 knows 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			
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		