



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Henry Street School for International Studies

Middle/High School 292

**220 Henry Street
New York
NY 10002**

Principal: Hoa Tu

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Reviewer: Peter Friend

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

This is a middle and high school with approximately 400 students from grades 6 through 11. The school opened in 2004, initially with students in grades 6, 7 and 9, and has been growing year by year. Next year it will cater for grade 12 as well. The school shares its building with two middle schools and occupies the fourth and part of the third floor of the building. As the school has expanded, space has become more restricted. Ninety-nine percent of students are eligible for Title 1 funding. This is a much higher proportion than similar and City schools.

The school population comprises 45% Black, 43% Hispanic, 10% Asian, and 2% white students. Twenty-five percent are special education students and 12% are English language learners. Attendance rates were 88.7% in 2005, which is below that of similar and City schools.

This is an Empowerment School. Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision for improving the school.
- The principal and assistant principal form a team that gives strong instructional leadership.
- Teachers are encouraged to take on leadership roles and to work on educational initiatives.
- Data has been used well to identify where improvement is needed, namely to improve the instruction and achievements of the special education students and higher achievers.
- The reorganization of teaching groups in the high school has resulted in better aligned instruction for students and has improved motivation.
- The reflection room has improved students' behavior and lessened pressure on teachers.
- The teachers collaborate well and share good practice.
- The commitment of the teachers is appreciated by both students and parents.
- The school is a strong learning community and teachers benefit from professional development to improve their instructional strategies.

What the school needs to improve

- Make increasing use of data as the schools grows to make comparisons of performance between different groups, over time and with similar schools.
- Continue to work to improve students' attendance and punctuality.
- Increase consistency in the school's approaches to curriculum planning, poor punctuality and promoting coherence between grades and between the middle and high school.
- Set clear data led goals for school improvement and monitor and evaluate the initiatives to assess their impact
- Continue to develop programs of instruction and differentiate learning appropriately to meet the needs of special education students and high achievers.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal and assistant principal have a clear vision for improving the school and together form an effective team in instructional leadership. They use data well to identify where improvement is needed and have instigated changes to improve the curricula and instruction, particularly for special education students and high school students. Many of these initiatives have yet to show significant impact to prove their effectiveness, but there have already been significant improvements in students' motivation.

The principal and assistant principal have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The collaborative atmosphere and the willingness of teachers to share good practice are clear assets for the future. All members of staff are committed to improvement, and both students and parents appreciate this. The administration is sometimes too occupied with the day-to-day running of the school to ensure that practices within the school are consistent and coherent, and that initiatives are making an impact.

As an Empowerment School, the designated periodic assessment materials have been used to generate data about reading and mathematics for grades 9 and 10. The teachers successfully use the results to group students and ensure reading materials are appropriate. The use of the materials is at an early stage and has yet to influence student progress.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school makes use of available data to keep track of pass rates and how its performance compares with other schools, though such information is of limited use as the school has been adding a grade level year by year since it opened in 2004. So far, it has also been difficult to compare its own performance with previous years as the school is still growing and there is considerable student turnover. There is limited data analysis of any disparity between ethnic groups or boys and girls. More extensive use is made of data gathered by the school itself about how individual students are progressing. Standardized tests and formal and informal assessments in the classroom are used to identify patterns of individual performance and pinpoint those students who are falling behind. In this way, the school has identified special education students and English language learners as the main groups in need of further support, and is endeavoring to boost pass rates in this latter group by employing extra teachers or offering extra classes. So far, this support has had limited impact. More detailed diagnostic analysis of the curriculum for these students and of the patterns of failure in tests have revealed areas of writing skill which these students need to improve in order to boost achievement levels. The school has begun to adjust the curriculum accordingly.

The school looks closely at data about the progress of individual students every few weeks. Pass and failure rates in City and State tests and school courses are discussed at grade team meetings of teachers, and the profile of achievement of individuals checked. If necessary, further action is taken by allocating time for the student with an adviser, who liaises with other teachers to construct a remedial program to improve performance. Again, advisory support has yet to make a significant impact. The school has also identified a pattern of progress which often has a plateau in mid-year, though as yet no concerted action has been taken to combat this.

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 teachers and senior staff work well together to review what has been achieved over the past year and to set goals for the following one. Measurable targets for success are set. The school is determined to increase the number of students passing courses in English language arts and mathematics, and to continue to increase the numbers passing science courses. As part of this process, failing students are identified in regular progress reports at each grade level. The potential reasons for failure are discussed with all their teachers and appropriate action taken. So far, the impact of such action can be clearly seen with some individuals whose performance has improved, but the overall figures still show too many students, especially special education students, underperforming

Attendance and poor punctuality are acknowledged as weaknesses in the school, and goals have been set for improvement. The goal set to improve behavior in the school has led to the creation of a reflection room to which students can go or be sent. This has had a beneficial effect on improving behavior and lessens pressure on teachers, though rewards and sanctions are not applied consistently throughout the school.

High expectations are set for students who willingly accept them along with their parents. Both students and parents know clearly how well they are doing and what they need to improve. Monthly letters sent out by grade teams help keep everyone informed.

Goals for improving performance are well known within the school community, but are prevented from having comprehensive impact by a lack of consistency in practice, for instance by advisers, and a lack of coherence between grades.

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 is developing a global studies curriculum to augment and link with the mandated curriculum in place. Opportunities are sought by teachers to link the two to benefit understanding. For instance, a teacher skillfully used a world map to enhance students’ understanding of the ways in which location influenced the work of an artist. Arabic tessellation has also helped to deepen senior students’ algebraic knowledge.

The school has identified special education students and high achievers as a focus for attention to improve performance and provide appropriate challenge in instruction. To this end, teachers are required to plan for more differentiation in their strategies for learning. The impact of this varies in effectiveness from class to class and between grades. One grade team has been successful in challenging high-achieving students with extension tasks in some subjects.

Decisions about budgeting, staffing and scheduling have been made in the light of data showing the need to improve students' performance. A major change in the high school has been the regrouping of students for some subjects so that they are taught in more homogenous groups. This has been a recent development and it is too early to evaluate its impact, but students, parents and teachers are enthusiastic about the benefits. There has already been a significant improvement in students' motivation. Resources have been targeted to effect this change in scheduling and teachers have been paid for extra planning time. Additional teachers have been hired for their subject expertise and more has been spent on professional development. Extra guidance counselors have also been funded to improve these services, though so far the impact has been limited. Students generally engage well in classes. They listen to the teachers and to each other. Classrooms are busy and businesslike. Staff and students are mutually respectful, though there is some inconsistency in different classes in dealing with students who misbehave.

One of the school's priorities is to improve attendance and punctuality, especially in the high school. There are appropriate systems, and a range of rewards and sanctions. However, some inconsistency in applying these by different teachers reduces their impact.

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 teachers have less teaching experience on average than other City schools. However, they compensate by their commitment to improving their students' performance and their willingness to take on leadership roles within a collaborative community. Both students and parents appreciate this commitment. One result is that teachers are markedly willing to share good practice and promote this by regular visits to observe each other's classes. The principal is well respected by faculty, students and parents. Routines have been established for the smooth running of the school, although there remains some inconsistency in the way these are interpreted.

Professional development is used by the principal as a key means of promoting change. Information from data and the principal's observations of classrooms have resulted in recent efforts to prepare high school teachers to undertake teaching in more homogenous classes and to include sharper differentiation in planning. Every teacher in the school has a planning template which highlights the learning objectives for each lesson and how students' understanding is to be assessed at the end. In practice, however, the sharpness of such planning is often diluted and students have a better understanding of what they are doing than why they are doing it.

The principal and assistant principal frequently observe classroom teaching and have a perceptive knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of each teacher. Teachers are informed orally, and in writing, about what was observed, but this is not always followed up

systematically to ensure that agreed practices are being undertaken or points for improvement acted upon.

Teams of teachers frequently plan together. This is most effective in grade level teams where clear agendas cover discussion of students' work, moderation of assessment and the sharing of instructional strategies. It is less strong and less consistent in achieving coherent communication across grade levels and subjects. However, programs of visits to other classes and to other schools help to stimulate new ideas to improve instruction.

The school makes good use of partnerships with outside bodies to fund academic enrichment courses, and to provide guidance counselors for students with social and emotional problems.

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 growth of the school year by year and the student turnover limit the effectiveness of evaluating or revising goals, but new initiatives, such as the restructuring of the teaching in the high school and the operation of the reflection room, are constantly monitored. Team teaching in the high school has also resulted in students tackling a course which would otherwise have been beyond them. Adjustments have been made to improve the day to day running of the school. Personalized learning plans for each student are monitored and revised throughout the year by their teachers.

Comparisons of students' progress across classes and subjects have led to a close examination of what teaching and learning strategies work best. Visits to observe other classes, professional debate and the views of students contributed to the decision to restructure teaching groups in the high school. The collaborative atmosphere in the school results in teachers' willingness to share practice and improve each other's weaknesses.

Discussions in grade teams often include assessments of the progress of individual students and the revision of targets or making changes to instructional strategies. One such discussion set goals for individual students for the improvement of behavior. Mock examinations are used to help students practice and evaluate best strategies and, as a consequence, to revise curricular planning. The analysis of the results of tests is used to identify what students know and where understanding needs improving. In one grade, attention to improving writing endurance has resulted in better performance in subsequent assessments.

The school is aware of the value of interim evaluation of the many initiatives to improve teaching and learning it has begun. Sometimes, the senior managers are too busy dealing with issues pertaining to the smooth daily running of the school to monitor sufficiently how well and how consistently the initiatives operate at classroom level.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Henry Street School for International Studies (MS/HS292)	∅	✓	+
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		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	