



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Walter H. Crowley Intermediate School

Intermediate School 5

**50-40 Jacobus Street
Queens
NY 11373**

Principal: Debra L. Van Nostrand

Dates of review: May 14 - 16, 2007

Reviewer: David King

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Walter Crowley Intermediate School is located in Elmhurst, Queens. It has 1550 students in grades 6, 7 and 8. The ethnic breakdown is 55% Hispanic, 39% Asian or Pacific Islander, 4% White and 2% White or others reflecting the school's intention that its community of learners represents the demographics of its home district. The school receives Title 1 funding for 96% of its students, which is higher than similar schools and other City schools. Attendance is consistently around 94%, which is also higher than similar schools and other City schools. Ten percent of the school population are special education students and 19% are English language learners.

The school has a principal and five assistant principals. The principal has worked at the school for many years but only became principal one year ago. The majority of teachers have fewer than five years experience.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision for the school and her dynamic leadership is highly focused on the school's needs.
- The school uses data rigorously to drive instruction.
- Collaborative processes are used well to establish academic goals.
- Judicious use of the budget ensures that all students are well supported.
- The instructional program engages the students who are aware of how to improve their performance.
- All staff know the students well and are highly responsive to their academic and personal needs.
- Attendance is a high priority for the school and it is well monitored.
- The school is an orderly well managed environment.
- High expectations are clearly conveyed by the principal and her cabinet and are understood and shared by the whole school community.
- The school provides a professional development program to meet the needs of all its teachers and to improve student outcomes.

What the school needs to improve

- Build on the recent Comprehensive Education Plan evaluation to ensure that all future goals are measurable using data.
- Modify the schedule to allow subject teams to meet more easily for common planning time.
- Continue to provide professional development for an inexperienced staff to support them in their growth.
- Implement the planned strategy to accelerate English language development in the English language learners.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The principal took over at the school in July 2006 following the resignation of the previous principal. The majority of the staff are young and inexperienced teachers. However, they are energetic, work well collaboratively and are supported with an effective professional development program which has helped them to become competent in the classroom and competent at using data.

The school is engaged in the careful tracking and analysis of students' progress and is responding well to that analysis in subsequent goal setting and planning. The school has developed a systematic method of tracking the longitudinal progress of individual students. The atmosphere is positive and the staff are constantly reviewing progress and updating provision for the students.

The school has many strengths, a key one being the detailed knowledge that is held about each student. The drive towards excellence is very strong and communication between school and home is good. Instruction is delivered by a team of teachers working hard to ensure that students at all levels make progress. The students themselves enjoy school and they are well mannered and articulate young people. The principal's self evaluation is honest and accurate and shows a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas which need further development.

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.

Information about students is collected systematically including formal assessments, interim assessments, conferencing notes and observations. The range of data available enables the school to track students' progress effectively across all grades. The school has established a thorough data base which allows information about students' progress to be accessed quickly by teachers. The system is used particularly effectively for identifying students showing concern and raising questions about the impact of curriculum plans on student performance.

The school has a clear understanding of the performance and progress of all of its students. It has analyzed student progress data to create an accurate picture of the academic needs of all of the ethnic groups in the school. The English language learners are closely monitored and plans for them to receive a program to further accelerate their language development are well developed. Students who receive special education services get well-targeted support from the special education teachers, and the analysis of their performance and progress is very thorough.

The school is very knowledgeable about all its students and has effective systems to monitor and compare the performance of sub groups such as the suspended students and students held over to repeat a grade. The academic intervention team is very efficient at monitoring and supporting struggling students and they hold regular conferences at which data is used effectively to support intervention decisions. There is a successful program for students held over to repeat a grade which provides them with an opportunity to take on more responsibility within the school.

The school knows that it is performing well in comparison to other similar schools and the cabinet is very competent at making comparisons of students' performance over the years they are in the school.

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

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

The school has three small learning communities called 'academies', each managed by an assistant principal. Progress data on each of the students in each academy is used skillfully to establish goals. The academy teams are a key part of the monitoring process in the school and provide a useful link to the parents. All teachers are routinely engaged in a departmental collaborative process to set challenging goals for the students. The routines of goal setting in the classroom are fully embedded, with the use of teacher assessment notebooks a strong feature of this work.

Departmental teams meet frequently before or after school as the schedule does not allow them to meet during the school day. Particular focus areas are discussed at these meetings and challenging goals and plans are established easily and effectively. The teachers are aware of the whole school goals and are appropriately engaged in their own goal setting to meet them. This has had the impact of teachers closely analyzing learning, creating groupings and then modifying them when needs arise throughout the year. The teacher assessment notebooks are a very effective diagnostic tool to assist teachers with short and medium term planning.

The students in greatest need of support receive a combination of targeted inclusion support from the special education services team, pull-out provision and the extended day program. This has had a considerable impact on improving students' self esteem and academic performance as well as engaging the teachers fully in reviewing their planning.

The principal and the cabinet have high expectations and they are conveyed to the whole school community. The focus in the classroom is on always on student learning and challenging goals are well-established within each academy. This has had a significant impact in raising student self esteem and creating a strong culture of success. Each academy has its own honors class and an increasing number of students are graduating on to specialized high schools.

There are regular links to the parents and caregivers. Parents are provided with clear and up to date information about their children's progress and any concerns the teachers may have. At conferencing meetings goals and plans are discussed in detail and the parents are at ease with the process. This process has established strong relationships with the

parents' group and has been instrumental in enabling them to support their children's learning effectively.

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.

Teachers design their own curriculum maps with the state standards and data generation in mind and design and follow units and strands with appropriate resources.. This is seen to good effect across all content areas with students regularly engaged in collaborative activity promoting investigation and discussion.

The principal insists that all teachers differentiate planning and instruction to meet the range of individual learning styles within a class. As a result, a significant amount of differentiation of instruction takes place across all subjects. This means the school is achieving an excellent balance between acceleration, enrichment and remediation in all instructional areas.

Budgetary decisions are well focused on improving student outcomes and appointments are made and resources purchased always with that in mind. There is a high commitment to the purchase of technology to support learning, including lap top carts and smart-boards. This has resulted in high level instructional strategies and the use and development of websites, web-logs and internet research in many classrooms.

The principal has carefully allocated staff to each area of the school in order to create equilibrium within an already co-operative team who are willing to collaborate and engage with the whole school philosophy. Scheduling limits opportunities for regular staff meetings, which are reliant on staff giving up their own time.

Student engagement is high and they find the teaching challenging. The students are enthusiastic learners who are able to talk about their learning and how to improve. They are confident in discussion and with peer or self assessment.

Student attendance is a high priority and the school has good procedures in place for contacting parents rapidly should the need arise.

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.

When appointing new staff, the principal's focus is on the needs of the students at the time. The principal always looks for teachers who are committed to improving student performance and whose approach to instruction will fit in with the school's philosophy.

Professional development programs are delivered throughout the year. The focus is on teaching and learning and improvement of practice. All staff are also encouraged to take part in peer and self assessments as part of their development. This program is effective

in raising the level of expertise amongst the staff, improving the quality of teaching and improving learning outcomes for the students.

The principal and assistant principals have a high profile around the school. Every teacher is observed regularly and judgments are made about practice with appropriate feedback. The cabinet is fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers, who respect their views and respond well to their expectations.

Planning, evaluations and goal setting takes place routinely in teams. Evaluations are frank and teachers use the information generated to plan the next steps. Thorough discussions take place about how to support students and how to push them on to a higher level of performance. Planning takes place with standards in mind and the focus is always on raising student performance.

The principal is well respected by staff, students and parents and routines within the school are clear, easily understood and followed by all members of the school community.

The school has a range of enrichment and instructional partnerships, such as America's Choice, Urban Advantage, the Hall of Science and St. John's University, which are used routinely and effectively as student motivators and to enhance teacher expertise.

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.

Goals have been established for the whole school and they have been shared with all members of the school community. The school's main goals within the Comprehensive Education Plan have until recently been very broad and not written in a way which is easily measurable which has made it difficult for the school to monitor and evaluate their implementation effectively. However, a recent evaluation of the Comprehensive Education Plan has led to the cabinet drawing up a fresh set of goals with clear points for action covering all of the content areas. These are very thorough and are an excellent example of diagnostic assessment resulting in detailed plans of action.

Goals set by individual teachers within departments and academy teams are securely based on data analysis and are realistic with a challenge for improvement. There is a good linkage with the goals they set for themselves at the start of the academic year and rigorous monitoring of progress at all levels takes place. Very detailed itemized analysis takes place of each student and appropriate interventions are introduced where necessary

Targeted interventions take place with students and frequent reviews and modifications of goals take place at departmental level. A regular cycle of improvement is in place and close monitoring of the work of the school at all levels is taking place, which is an integral part of the planning cycle.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Walter Crowley Intermediate School (IS 5)	∅	✓	+
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	