



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Nathaniel Hawthorne Middle School**

**Middle School 074**

**61-15 Oceania Street  
Queens  
NY 11364**

**Principal: Andrea Dapolito**

**Dates of review: November 27 - 29, 2006**

**Reviewer: Louise Kapner**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Nathaniel Hawthorne Middle School is located in Bayside, Queens. It is a middle school for grades 6 through 8. The majority of students come from the local community. A number of students on each grade level, however, attend the school from further away under the No Child Left Behind act. The school does not receive Title I funding.

The present enrollment is approximately 1021 students. The student body is 61.7% Asian, 20.7% White, 8.6% Black, 8.9% Hispanic and 0.1% other. The school has more male than female students. Five percent of students are English language learners. The 15% of special education students are in self-contained, special education teacher support and related service programs. Some students have been identified as students with severe disabilities and take part in the New York State Alternate Assessment in English language arts and mathematics.

The attendance rate is 97%, which is above similar and City wide schools. The school has a full complement of teaching staff, the majority of whom are fully certified.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and administrative team have established a collegial, collaborative and successful school.
- All constituents, including staff, parents and students view the school with high regard.
- There is on-going review of available data and school generated data by support staff, teachers, and administrators to help drive instruction and ensure the effective delivery of support services.
- For students performing below grade level, numerous interventions have been implemented successfully.
- The school climate fosters high student attendance, high morale and a safe environment for the entire school community.
- The principal is very resourceful and maximizes the budget allocation to enhance the school's program.
- Well-focused professional development is provided across the curricula areas on an on-going basis and is made available to all staff.
- Teachers convey high expectations for their students and create supportive learning environments.
- Students are very positive about learning and are engaged and active participants in their daily instruction.
- Various out-reach efforts have been undertaken successfully to increase parent participation.

### What the school needs to improve

- Review data of student sub-groups on the 8th grade English language arts test and the science test to identify those students who have shown a decline in their performance and the reasons for this.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well-developed school.**

Middle School 074 combines an emphasis on academic programming with high expectations while ensuring a safe environment. The principal, assistant principals, teachers and other staff are committed to giving all students an opportunity to be successful. While in her third year, the principal has not rested on past successes but has used her tenure to move the school forward as evidenced in the continual growth on the standardized tests. She is well versed in accessing school data and uses it on a regular basis to identify and implement programming needs. Her budgeting acumen allows her to initiate many programs. The principal's focus on excellence is shared and mirrored by her dedicated staff who are constantly striving to provide remedial support, daily instruction, and enrichment activities to enhance learning. They recognize the support that they receive to this end.

Parent and student groups spoke very highly of the school. In addition to mentioning the rigorous instructional program, parents described the principal as having an "open door" and students said that everyone "really cares about you." Middle School 074 is a highly successful school.

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

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

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

The school collects detailed data on the performance and progress of all students. The "New York Start" web-site is accessed by the administration and staff on a regular basis. This report provides an alphabetical listing of all students by grade by standardized test with an item skills analysis. This data is used well to drive instruction and identify students to receive academic intervention services and the extended day program. To facilitate accessing the information the principal has ordered computers for the teachers' lounge so that they might have greater availability to the site. The teachers expressed their support for this initiative. Data is routinely distributed and analyzed at staff and departmental meetings.

The data received from the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test was used for the first time this year to group students to provide push-in services in the classroom to ensure congruence of instruction with the classroom teacher. The school is awaiting results from the first Princeton interim assessment to analyze and then use to guide instruction. Teachers also design and use informal pre and post assessments to drive instruction and plan for any additional support such as the extended day program.

Monitoring of student progress is on-going. Interim progress reports reflecting grades in each subject area are completed for each student and mailed home. Report cards are

computer generated and summary reports are reviewed to identify and plan interventions for struggling students. Common meeting time for teachers allows for further review of individual students. Comparisons of data with that from previous years are made to determine the progress of subgroups, as well as to identify trends and patterns. More work is needed to understand the decline in the number of students achieving on levels 3 and 4 on 8th grade tests, however. In English language arts this is required for all subgroups, except for special education and Hispanic students. In science it is required for Black students.

**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 principal and her administrative team place a great deal of emphasis on providing for the instructional needs of all students and do this through a fully collaborative process. Faculty conferences, sub-school cluster team meetings, regularly scheduled departmental conferences and professional development are all opportunities to set goals for instruction. They also provide opportunity to discuss individual students and plan additional academic intervention services for those students on levels 1 and 2. Each student has a portfolio including a reading accuracy assessment and running record which drives instruction. The extended time serves mandated and voluntary students in small groups of eight to ten. As subject area teachers provide instruction for their own students they are able to focus in on areas of need. As a result of reviewing the data, and using it to plan instruction, the English language learners have made significant strides and the number of students reaching the proficient level has increased. The individual education plans for special education students are standards based and used to identify specific areas of need and drive instructional services well. School counselors review report card grades each marking period, identify students at risk, and plan collaboratively with administrators and teachers to implement appropriate services. The success of these interventions can be seen by the continued progress of all students as evidenced in the data.

The school conveys its high expectations well and ensures that students and parents are knowledgeable about the school’s goals. Student handbooks are distributed each fall and parents are invited to a curriculum night, as well as parent teacher conferences. Subject area teachers work jointly on an information sheet and uniform grading policy, which are also shared with parents. This year a conference was held for parents of students performing below grade level. They received a personal invitation to attend. Attendance was excellent. Interim grade reports, sent out three times a year between report card marking periods, have been translated into Korean and Chinese, and are sent via regular mail to all parents. The school’s web site shares all information including how parents can access their own child’s test data. Parents are part of the goal-setting for the school through the parent teacher association and school leadership team.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

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

The school has a well-developed curriculum in all subject areas and its impact can be seen in the consistent high level of achievement. Subject area textbooks are reviewed each year and new ones ordered as appropriate to align instruction with State standards. Teachers are involved with this process. The librarian supports these efforts by ordering materials that are congruent with classroom instruction and has set aside space in the library specific to each subject area. Priority is also given to ordering materials of high interest for the lower level learner.

Programming is guided by data, as well as the needs of the students. Earth science was initiated for higher achieving students last year. The school allocated essential resources for textbooks and laboratory materials. New computers were purchased and replaced obsolete ones in the library and the school continues to pursue outside resources to update its computer laboratory. A Project Arts allocation is used well to support the Spanish program by integrating dance, culture and literature into the classroom. Other department teachers are encouraged to participate in enrichment programs that will supplement classroom instruction and support learning. The principal is very adept at maximizing the monies allocated and as any additional monies become available they are earmarked for additional programs and/or materials as needed.

The teachers are held accountable for the quality of their instruction and for student outcomes. Formal observations are supplemented well with less formal observations and walkthroughs. Teachers use data well to create student groupings and to differentiate their instruction. Students are very positive about learning and know what is expected of them. They are engaged and active participants in their daily instruction. One student shared that teachers "teach so students can learn." Attendance is above similar and City schools and absences for regular day classes and extended day are quickly followed up. Teachers receive a daily absence report by 9:30 and are thereby able to track student absences and identify potential cutting. Selection and assignment of staff, as well as school scheduling, such as the morning extended day, reflects an approach that supports students' learning.

**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.**

New staff are selected based upon an interview and observation of a lesson. Programming of appointed staff is carefully thought out and reassignments are implemented as appropriate to programming needs. Teachers are encouraged to take coursework that might allow them to be assigned to teach accelerated courses, and all teachers are supported by professional development throughout the school year. Professional development is provided to all staff on the access and use of data, and school-wide professional development was presented by the literacy coach on how to use this data in the content areas. This year the school has undertaken a greater role in professional development in the Teachers' College reading and writing program. The literacy coach and assistant principal for English language arts have programmed a one

day a week collaborative activity. One period the English language arts teachers observe a demonstration lesson given by a Teachers' College coach, and then spend a period discussing the lesson. Newer teachers are given opportunities for classroom intervisitations and assigned a mentor when needed.

The leadership and management of the school operate at a very high level. The school runs very smoothly, with clear procedures which are followed by all. The principal sets high standards for herself, her administrative team and staff. She is well respected by the whole school community and has a very high capacity to effect change. Formal and informal observations are part of the regular routine and the principal does one of the three mandated formal observations of all non-tenured teachers. There is a true sense of a team for all teachers within grades and subject areas and across the entire school. They are appreciative of the support of the administration and see themselves as a learning community with high expectations for themselves and their students. Youth development and support service providers are an integral part of the school team and their responsibilities are directly linked to supporting student achievement.

**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 well developed.**

Middle School 074 is a very successful school, but it is not complacent and is always revisiting instructional needs and programming. An 8th grade peer tutoring program in mathematics began recently in response to student need. The program is supervised by a teacher and subject area assistant principal and attendance is good. Decision-making on new initiatives is shared across all constituents. The identification of students needing additional support, program design, regular monitoring of student achievement, and revision of instructional plans is evident and contributes to ensuring continued student progress and high achievement in this highly successful school.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is a collaborative effort of each department and is shared and reviewed by each constituent group. This serves as a guide as to the goals of the school and program implementation, but there is constant review of data and student achievement as new initiatives are undertaken. The school's leadership team is very active in reviewing progress towards the goals in the plan.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Nathaniel Hawthorne Middle School (MS 074)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
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"> <li>• ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students*</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
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"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>

\* 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.

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>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.</b>	Ø	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X
<b>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.</b>	Ø	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X
<b>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.</b>	Ø	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.			X
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X