



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Steinway Intermediate School

Public School 141

**37-11 21 Avenue
Queens
NY 11105**

Principal: Miranda Pavlou

Dates of review: May 16 - 18, 2007

Reviewer: Roy Blatchford

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Steinway School, with NASA designation, is a middle school with an enrollment, covering grades 6 through 8, of 1079 students who come primarily from the local neighborhoods. The school has three academies. The population comprises approximately 7% Black students, 33% White students, 44% Hispanic and 16% Asian students. Approximately 8% of the school's population are special education students and a further 5% are English language learners. The average attendance rate for students is 93%, just above that found in similar and City schools. The school is Title 1 eligible with 64% of students qualifying, which is in line with similar and City schools. The current principal took up her position in February 2007.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is well respected by staff, students and parents and has strong capacity to lead further improvements.
- Regular 'walkthroughs' by senior staff ensure classroom practice remains of a high standard, and lead to effective sharing of ideas and teaching techniques.
- Robust systems exist to measure and check individual student's performance, especially the teacher assessment books.
- Teachers plan well differentiated activities and set high expectations in classrooms.
- Effective programs are in place to raise the performance of special education students and English language learners, and to extend honors students.
- Technology is used skillfully to record and manage the effective use of data.
- Students' needs are effectively addressed in collaborative team teaching classrooms.
- Professional development is imaginatively planned and has a decisive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The NASA school designation leads to a significantly enriched curriculum for all students.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop protocols across the three academies to ensure consistency of best practice in teaching and learning.
- Ensure data analysis is applied consistently by all teachers in planning for student outcomes.
- Develop data systems in science and social studies to drive instruction.
- Seek to increase the attendance of students during the 37.5 minutes.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with well-developed features.

Steinway School is one in which students arrive ready to learn and make the most of the wide range of learning opportunities available to them. There is a strong family culture, plenty of laughter and with mutual respect shown between all adults and students. A number of the staff themselves attended the school. Students feel safe and value the fact that there is always a teacher close by to support them. A striking feature of most classrooms is the exciting and skillfully differentiated learning which is well aligned to the needs of the students, including special education students and English language learners. Teachers at all levels in the school are using data appropriately to monitor students' performance and inform instructional practice. The curriculum is thoughtfully aligned to the middle school graduation requirements, and interdisciplinary and project work is enhanced by its NASA school designation.

The principal provides clear and enabling leadership and she has made a considerable impact on the whole school since taking up post. The principal is supported by a team of teachers who share her passion to ensure that every student's personal and academic development is nurtured. Staff pursue a wide range of professional development programs to inform their instruction, and are eager to discuss practice and try out ideas. The school is determined to secure even greater success in the future with a particular focus on ensuring greater consistency across the three academies.

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 data collected by the school enables it to establish and maintain a clear picture of the starting points, the progress and achievement of all students. The school studies carefully how its own students are performing relative to those in similar and City schools. The school did not meet the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) target because it failed to test 95% of the students. The principal has ensured that in both 2006 and 2007 98% of students were tested, which should allow the AYP target to be met.

Led by the principal, the cabinet, lead teachers and coaches ensure that classroom teachers are aware of the starting points of their students particularly in English and mathematics. Intervention checklists are prepared by English language arts and mathematics teachers, and these are monitored by the principal and assistant principals. The school is working to use data more effectively in science and social studies in order to drive instruction. It is also aware of the need to ensure greater consistency in data analysis across the three academies.

Data about students' achievement upon enrollment to the school is used effectively to identify special education students and English language learners so that suitable teaching

programs can be designed for them, although data on grade 6 students is not consistently available at the start of the academic year. Some academies hold regular reviews to ensure that when a student's progress accelerates, suitable adjustments are made promptly to that student's program of instruction. The school has looked at performance trends between different groups of students, including those related to gender and ethnicity. It has taken imaginative steps to challenge under-performance, for example with some English language learners who have been provided with successful intervention programs.

The school has considerable experience in using technology to track students' progress and, starting in mathematics, is creating its own high quality systems so that all teachers can access computer-based records alongside paper-based systems. The attractive library and learning center records carefully students' book borrowing and visits in order to identify which students need to be targeted to encourage wider reading programs.

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.

A feature of the school is the strong collaborative culture within which administration and teachers at all levels set demanding goals and suitable timeframes to achieve those goals. Within each academy, teams of teachers at grade level and subject meetings review regularly how groups of students and individuals are making progress. Discussions are informed by their teacher assessment books which contain comprehensive and authoritative tracking of every individual student's progress in English language arts and mathematics. Those students in greatest need of improvement receive particular attention to enable them to succeed.

Formative and summative comments shape a constantly updated understanding of performance and required interventions. Students commented on how well the teachers know their work, and their own portfolios, which move with them up through the grades, and ensure that teachers know consistently what each student is capable of. The school recognizes that the best practice that is developed by a group of teachers in one academy has not been shared across the whole school, and the new principal is making this dissemination of best practice a key priority within the updated Comprehensive Education Plan.

The school's consistently high expectations are well communicated to students and parents. Celebration bulletin boards in classrooms promote these expectations, and parents and students consider the quarterly progress cards to be of value in reporting on performance. The reports of tests in English language arts and mathematics conducted annually by the New York State Testing Program, and the results of the Princeton tests are communicated consistently to parents. The views of students and parents are gathered systematically through surveys which focus on the quality of home/school communication, academic instruction and intervention services. Parents report that the school has provided excellent guidance for 8th graders seeking entry to high schools.

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 provides an imaginatively planned curriculum which meets the mandatory requirements for grades 6 through 8. Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are well targeted to maximize students’ achievement, for example in the way grade 6 and grade 7 English language learners are scheduled to best support their individual needs and to capitalize on the considerable expertise of the teachers within the school. Induction procedures for new teachers are well established and ensure that teachers understand the importance the school places on constantly improving student outcomes.

Teachers are fully aware of their accountability for the progress of the students they teach and have in-depth knowledge of individual students in their care. Classrooms are characterized by warm relationships and good humor, a calm and purposeful working climate, and by high quality displays of students’ work. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their subject and ask probing questions to extend students’ horizons. Smartboards are used engagingly. Group work is animated and skillfully differentiated; in honors classes the demand of the work leads to some outstanding discussion and project work. Instructional goals for mathematics, language arts, English language learners, science and social studies are displayed consistently in classrooms and hallways. English language arts teachers working together in collaborative team teaching classes use each other’s expertise to stimulate students’ thinking and engagement. Lead teachers, coaches, deans, counselors and office staff all make distinctive and valuable contributions to supporting students’ personal and academic performance.

Attendance is a high priority and it is monitored closely within each class, grade and across the three academies. Procedures to follow up on any lateness are absenteeism and robust, fair and clearly understood and appreciated by students and parents. The school works assiduously to maximize students’ attendance during the 37.5 minutes mandated program, but the school considers that it is still not good enough. Students who are absent from school are followed up methodically to make sure they catch up with any projects they might have missed.

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.

The principal has many years experience in the school, previously leading with distinction one of the three academies. She has an unambiguous vision for the school to be well developed in all aspects, and she works tirelessly with all staff and students to effect improvements. Under her leadership, the environment for learning is a priority and in hallways and classrooms this is evident. She has considerable capacity to motivate teachers in a way that inspires them to be even more effective teachers, and regularly joins in classes to satisfy herself that the quality of teaching is high and that students are working to their best potential. Her leadership is infectious and enables her senior colleagues to monitor performance as an integral part of their everyday work. Teachers especially value the way she recognizes good classroom practice with the award of a

'caught you doing good' notice. The annual program for the formal observation of teachers is conducted productively by the principal and assistant principals.

A hallmark of the school is the way in which the staff, individually and in groups, are constantly seeking to refine and improve their practice. They give their time generously to this aspect of their own professional development. Some teachers have visited similar schools to compare approaches to reading and as a result have improved services for reluctant readers, while others have benefited from courses on technology and Shakespeare.

Partnerships with outside bodies are numerous, and the students and parents commented positively on the how the wide range of visitors to the school and trips out of school contribute to improving academic goals. Early morning and after-school clubs provide additional learning opportunities for students in language and mathematics.

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.

There is a climate for constant and rigorous self-review; the school's structures are conducive to detailed examination of what is working for students and how, day by day and term by term, improvements can be made. Action plans are objective and measurable. Monitoring and evaluation systems are secure, with the school wishing to ensure that best practice operates across all here academies. In the words of one teacher, "we dissect the data right and left".

The school profile and the Comprehensive Education Plan are valuable working documents, regularly revised. They are drawn up with the participation of all staff, many of whom commented openly about how valuable it has been preparing for the quality review, particularly making them more aware of comparative data on the students. The progress of all students is the consistent focus of the various teams in the school; when decisions to revise instruction programs or realign the curriculum are taken, they are acted upon promptly and always in the best interests of the students.

This is a school where all staff are involved, from a position of knowledge, and contribute enthusiastically to the performance and outcomes of the students they serve. Planning, analysis of data, evaluation of the impact of strategic decisions, imaginative and engaging teaching – all these lead to accelerating each student's learning.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Steinway School (IS141)	∅	✓	+
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