



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Intermediate School 230

**73-10 34 Avenue
Queens
NY 11372**

Principal: Ms Sharon Terry

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Reviewer: Chris Andrews

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Intermediate School 230 is a school with 977 students enrolled in grades 6 through 8. Thirteen percent of these students are special education students and 12% are English language learners. The school population is predominantly Hispanic (54%) and Asian/Pacific (37%) but there are also 7% White students and 2% Black students. Attendance is very good, and the figure of 94.8% is above those for both City and similar schools. The school is entitled to Title 1 funding for 80.6% of its students, a figure which is significantly higher than that for City and similar schools.

The school is divided vertically into four Academies (Law and Government; Environmental Science and Health; Communication Arts and Drama; Business and Finance), each under its own assistant principal and with its own particular areas of focus. Students in 5th grade elementary schools are able to put forward preferences as to which Academy they would like to enroll in, depending upon their interests and long-term goals. The assistant principals have a responsibility also for one of the major departments in the school.

The school is very popular with parents, and is as a consequence overcrowded. Over the past three years the percentage of utilization has fluctuated between 121% and 140%.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school provides its teachers with a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data.
- Planning and the setting of goals involve all members of the school community and are embedded in the data.
- Expectations are very high and fully understood by students, staff and parents.
- Teachers are highly qualified and experienced in teaching at the school, and in general provide engaging instruction.
- The principal is respected for her commitment and for her capacity to lead and manage change.
- The excellent program of extra-curricular activities is focused on school goals and enriches the students' learning experiences.
- Students enjoy coming to school and feel very safe in the school environment.
- Attendance is very good and there are rewards for high and perfect attendance.
- The Comprehensive Education Plan is a valuable document which leads the school forward.
- The school has a recognized, well evidenced understanding of its strengths and areas for development.

What the school needs to improve

- Students and their parents do not always know what the children have to do to improve, and are not always clear why particular goals have been set.
- Not all teachers differentiate their instruction as part of the normal, expected practice within the school.
- Not all classes provide students with a wide range of stimulating activities.
- Self and peer evaluation is not yet a regular process nor well embedded into whole school practice.
- There is not enough time for teachers to make focused intervisitations and to share their observations in the role of 'critical friend'.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with well-developed features.

Intermediate School 230 is a school which has a clear vision for its future and that of its students. This vision is summed up by the principal's commitment to the view that 'Excellence is expected; no excuses accepted', and she and her staff embody this in all that they do. Although the principal is relatively new, having been appointed in 2004, she has won the respect of the school community by her determination to develop the school as a 'learning community'.

In this the role of the academies and the assistant principals is central. The academies allow students to pursue interests and aspirations, whilst the vertical organization allows the assistant principals to have a whole-school role which ensures that all students are known and none should be able to 'slip through the net'.

Similarly, the instructional team acts as a body which ties together all aspects of school development through its weekly meetings and by the fact that its membership encompasses all departments and support areas of the school. There is therefore cohesion in the leadership and management of the school which allows teachers to see clearly the vision and the goals for the 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 provides its teachers with a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data. In addition to the monthly Princeton tests and the quarterly City tests, the school generates its other data through its own tests which in mathematics and science are based on the Princeton model and which focus on specific areas of the curriculum. These test scores are recorded in each teachers' 'teacher's anecdotal notebook' alongside the more qualitative data in the form of conference notes and teacher observations in class. This is also where teachers keep individual education plans and other data such as the results of Developmental Reading Assessments. Leveled student work is kept in their portfolios, and these two sources of data inform planning and the monitoring of student progress in monthly meetings as either departments or academies.

Special education students are similarly tested and categorized as tier 1 or tier 2 students. The former have 'push in' support, the latter 'pull out', but there are detailed action plans for each child. This is also the case for students who have been otherwise identified as a group of special interest. In this year work is being done in terms of gender, and there is also a focus on level 3/4 students. Analysis of the June 2006 data, and comparisons with previous years in the school, suggested a decline in the performance of these students, so teachers have been focusing on developing specific skill areas. Data is regularly

compared across the school and with similar schools through either the instructional team or in the departments.

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.

Planning and the setting of goals involve all members of the school community and are embedded in the data. The instructional team analyzes data at its regular meetings and evaluates progress in general. It makes strategic decisions and determines whole school issues, as well as discussing individual students or groups on occasion. These goals are then transmitted to the teachers through the different teams, with a central role for the assistant principals. Goals for classes and for individual students are created at grade and department level, but these are adapted by the team from the instructional team’s to meet the needs of a particular grade or class. The additional instructional support team and the English language learner teachers contribute to the wider process through their representation at the different team meetings, and thus support the teachers in their planning to deliver appropriate instruction. Consequently teachers are developing skills to teach these groups and are sharing in setting their goals, which often relate to the increase or reduction of levels of support, dependant on student progress.

Expectations are very high and fully understood by students, staff and parents, and the parents are able to discuss their children’s progress at conferences, but also feel very able to come into school at any time to speak with a teacher or a member of the administration. In terms of short term goals however students and their parents do not always appear to know what the children have to do to improve nor are clear why particular goals have been set. A good use of bulletin boards with leveled and annotated work does provide students with additional guidance as to what constitutes, for example, a good level 4 piece of work.

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 with well developed features.

The school uses the Impact Mathematics curriculum and the America’s Choice Balanced Literacy curriculum, which both provide models for structuring instruction and generate data (along with the testing schedules already noted). Teachers are accountable for their classes to their assistant principal, both within the academy and their department. They are expected to be familiar with the data for each child and discussions show this to be generally true. In this way the assistant principals have a detailed view of student progress both within and across grades, and are able to respond effectively to changes in student needs.

Teachers are highly qualified and experienced in teaching at the school, and in general provide engaging instruction, but not all teachers differentiate their instruction as part of the normal, expected practice within the school. The discussions held by the instructional team are focused on the data and from this information decisions are made about staffing, resources and scheduling, such as the introduction of honors classes to target the more

able students. This is all incorporated within the Comprehensive Education Plan so that there are very clear links between the instructional needs of the school and the deployment of all resources.

Students enjoy most classes and are able to talk clearly about the purpose of most of their activities within a class. They particularly enjoy classes with a 'hands on' dimension to them, but it is fair to comment that not all classes provide students with a wide range of stimulating activities. Overall students enjoy coming to school and feel very safe in the school environment. Attendance is very good and there are rewards such as 'dress down days' and 'pizza parties' for high and perfect attendance.

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 with well developed features.

The principal has a clear view of the qualities she looks for in new staff and the potential to use data effectively is one of these. She looks above all for teachers who have strong pedagogical skills, as manifest in a model lesson, who are reflective practitioners and who share her vision of excellence. The principal observes teachers both formally and informally on a regular basis as do the assistant principals who see this as a key way to monitor their academies. The principal has a clear procedure for supporting teachers who are experiencing difficulties and she also uses a system of 'feedbacks and wows!' after walk throughs to inform teachers of what she has observed.

The school has a system whereby each teacher has self-evaluated his or her needs in terms of professional development and the principal uses a range of strategies to help teachers address areas for development. However, while the use of coaches and attendance at workshops is well established, self and peer evaluation is not yet a regular process, nor is there enough time for teachers to make focused intervisitations and to share their observations in the role of 'critical friend', although this does happen informally when possible.

Teams meet regularly for collaborative planning and they also use this time to evaluate the progress that different groups and individuals are making. These meetings are characterized by a willingness to review openly areas of concern, which reflects on the trust the staff have in each other. The principal is respected for her commitment and for her capacity to lead and manage change. All members of the school community agree that it functions smoothly and that communications are good. The excellent program of extra-curricular activities, involving such diverse groups as the Theatre in the Park, Chess in the Schools and The Museum of the Moving Images, is clearly focused on school goals. This program enriches the learning experiences of the students.

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.

The senior leadership team and the instructional team regularly meet and use data to inform their discussions. A key focus is the Comprehensive Education Plan which is a valuable and living document which leads the school forward. The goals within it are measurable, time linked and with clearly identified responsibilities and success criteria. There are no timed benchmarks but it is clear from agendas and minutes that there is reflection on each section of the Comprehensive Education Plan in the different teams according to their responsibilities.

The assistant principals monitor the departmental plans and are directly accountable to the principal. Teachers know they are accountable to the assistant principals, and discussions regularly take place (both formally and informally) about the progress of different groups of students or individuals. The standardized scores from external tests have reflected what the school expected from its own analysis and the school has a recognized, well evidenced understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Therefore, for example, the school has already identified areas for development in 2007-08 and the implementation program is already underway to change the provision of reading books for level 3 and 4 students and to schedule the English and mathematics curriculum from January and March respectively in order to address the preparation for grade test more effectively.

The evaluation of plans as part of a coherent planning cycle is well-embedded in the school's practice, and a review of past Comprehensive Education Plans reveals a coherent pattern of development from year to year.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Intermediate School 230	∅	✓	+
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