



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The New Dorp School

Public School 041

**216 Clawson Street
Staten Island
NY 10306**

Principal: Elise Feldman

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Reviewer: Denis Pittman

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The New Dorp School is an elementary school with an enrolment of 671 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population represents 68.3% White students, 22.7% Hispanic, 2.4% Black and 6.4% Asian. Within the student population, 9% receive special education. The school is eligible for Title 1 funding. Eight percent of students are English language learners. School attendance in 2005, at 92.5%, was in line with the average for City schools but below average in comparison with similar schools.

The school building, dating from 1926, is well maintained, attractively decorated and celebrates students' work with interesting and stimulating displays. The principal was appointed last term and has already made a significant impact upon the development of the school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has been very effective in creating a positive environment to sustain change and promote continuous improvement.
- The school has a clear purpose and sense of direction.
- A collaborative and supportive team climate exists in the school.
- There is systematic and effective use of data to support the educational needs of students.
- Students are very well cared for and supported by staff.
- The school actively encourages the involvement and participation of its local community.
- The school's support agencies are used well to deal with the needs of special education students and English language learners.
- Assessment binders are used very effectively to record and monitor student progress.
- The school is an orderly and secure environment where students know what is expected of them.
- The school has created a positive and stimulating environment which helps students to learn and progress.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve achievement in English language arts particularly at grades 3 and 4.
- Ensure greater consistency in the application of differentiated instructional programs in lessons.
- Continue to develop the use of project and inquiry-based approaches in lessons.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school,

New Dorp School provides a good education for its students. It promotes a safe, caring environment for children where each student is valued as an individual. Relationships in the school are positive and caring. The school has high expectations of performance and standards of behavior. Students respond with interest and an enthusiasm for learning.

The new principal has created a good team culture in the school. Parents value and support the changes and developments that have been made. The school has an open-door policy to encourage parental participation. The school makes good use of data to track the progress of its students.

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 very detailed data on the performance and progress of each student. All staff assess their students' achievement in a range of ways, using New York State tests and school-produced assessments to check on the progress of individuals. Examples of the range of data collected by the staff include students' reading journals, their writing journals and the outcomes of conferencing exercises. The effect on students' achievement is very well documented. Each teacher has an assessment folder of information that shows clear evidence of continuous evaluation and interpretation. These folders are monitored regularly and frequently by the principal and senior staff who carry the responsibilities for specific subjects, especially English language arts and mathematics. Currently achievement in English language arts is not as strong as mathematics, particularly in grades 3 and 4.

School leaders and class teachers make good use of the data to gain a better understanding of what each student knows and what each needs to do next in order to make progress. The analysis of data compares the needs of different groups of children in relation to their achievement in English language acquisition, gender and ethnicity. This analysis also looks at outcomes in classrooms and within grades. The school uses its data effectively to identify children who are talented and need further challenge in their instructional programs. The school is aware of its performance in comparison with similar schools and is continually striving to build upon its successes.

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 data collected by the school is used as the main focus for its annual Comprehensive Education Plan. The objectives developed in the plan drive instruction for the whole school community. The plan helps to effectively set and identify goals in each content area for the school, class, staff and students. There is strong evidence to show that school leaders and class teachers consistently use all the available data to plan each student's next learning step. The school has successfully made the important link between accurate interpretation of the data and what happens to students' learning in class.

The school's monitoring systems are being developed well. Particularly effective are the monthly grade and faculty conferences. Students are set goals and given rubrics to enable them to plot their own performance and evaluate their own progress. Parents are kept well aware of their children's progress in formal conferences and informal meetings arranged at other times. Parents are also given written guidance about how they can support their children at home, helping them to make better progress and to reach higher levels of achievement. A parental education program is responsive to parents' needs and staff do their best to reach out to those who find it difficult to attend school events. Parents are welcomed in the school and contact is sought where any student is having difficulty. This supportive environment helps convey the high expectations the school has of each student in relation to their work, behavior and attendance levels.

The school has very good intervention strategies designed to support special education students and those who are English language learners. These strategies operate within classes where special support is given to students to meet their particular needs. The school operates well-attended morning and afternoon academies to support children who have gaps in their learning.

Overall the substantial information held by the school in relation to students is used very effectively to monitor and revise the teachers' instructional plans. The plans reflect the school's major priority to improve all students' performance, as well as the positive partnership the school has with parents and community-based organizations.

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 balanced curriculum with a clear focus on the basic skills of English language arts and mathematics. There are also appropriate programs in science, art and physical education. These instructional programs generate meaningful data to reflect the progress and needs of individual students.

A central theme of the new administration is that teachers should be accountable for ensuring that their instructional programs are appropriate and evaluated. The interpretation of the performance data has an immediate effect on the alignment of the curriculum, and its subsequent translation into class planning and instruction. A continuing

emphasis has been placed upon ensuring that there is appropriate differentiation of activities for individual students. The school recognizes that this is an ongoing area for development and additional professional support.

Budgetary decisions reflect curriculum planning well. For example, in mathematics, practical and investigatory resources were bought to support the increased emphasis on an inquiry approach in the teaching of the subject. This is a practical illustration of the school increasing its emphasis on creating the 'thinking curriculum'. Resources have also been allocated to the creation of model classrooms in both English language arts and mathematics, as exemplars of good practice for other members of staff.

The staffing provision reflects the needs of the curriculum and students well. In particular, the administration is very effective in using support staff and other agencies to provide additional perspectives on the needs of individual special education students. The school schedules the time of the English language arts and mathematics coaches effectively to support the needs of individual teachers. The support ranges from guidance for the newest teachers, to more experienced teachers who are introducing programs such as guided reading.

The students report that they enjoy their lessons. They are aware of the high expectations of the school and respond well. They feel that they are well cared for and respected. If they need help they know who to go to and are confident that they will get the support they want. A strong aspect of the school is the family culture which is reflected in these interactions. The parents' and students' commitment to the school is mirrored in the high level of attendance. The school is proactive in promoting good attendance as an important aspect of maintaining and improving standards of performance.

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 new principal has made her expectations of the performance of all staff very clear. These expectations are reflected in a statement of 'bottom lines', which includes, for example, the compilation of portfolios, the use of agreed principles of learning, a focus on effective questioning, and the use of conferencing as an assessment tool. Staff are willing to share their ideas and operate effectively as a self-evaluative group. Everyone is committed to improving their professional practice.

There are constraints on the level of professional development within the school due to issues of scheduling, budget and time. The school addresses these in imaginative ways such as 'lunch and learn' meetings and voluntary study groups. Professional development arises from discussion among instructional team members and the needs of staff.

Raising the quality of teaching is central to the process of change and improvement which the principal has initiated. In her contact with teachers and students the principal constantly re-enforces the value of learning. Equally, she illustrates that she too is a learner and sets herself high standards by being well briefed before introducing new initiatives. In a relatively short period in office, the principal has earned the respect of staff, students and parents alike. Her open style and supportive approach are particularly valued. The principal is constantly in classrooms and other areas of the school informally observing staff, talking to students and looking at their work, as well as carrying out formal

observation. In consequence, she has a very good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development for her staff. The culture of support and high expectations that she has created is effective in ensuring maximum performance from teachers, other staff and students. The school runs smoothly because of the good management of the administration. The school is a safe and secure environment for students. Parents are involved in the school as reading volunteers and raise funds through a wide range of activities.

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 cycle of analysis, goal setting and review outcomes is used well. The school has robust systems for monitoring the impact of its plans and policies on students' learning. The school's Comprehensive Education Plan is very detailed with clear targets across all areas of the curriculum. It specifies deadlines, identifies responsible individuals and includes criteria by which to measure success. It provides a very clear direction to the school's course over the year. All staff are fully aware of the goals that the plan contains for the school year. They feel that the openness of communication between the administration and leadership team and staff is a strength of the school.

There is a strong awareness of where students are succeeding and where they are in need of additional support. The school has a good range of assessment procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the pace of students' progress. Where there are concerns about the achievement of individuals, the necessary adjustments are made to strategies, plans and professional development. Coaches look at data in a proactive way to guide their planning. Details about the progress of individual students are arrived at through grade meetings, school leadership team meetings and discussions between other professionals who bring their expertise to the school. The grade meetings include evaluating past performance, setting up weekly plans and looking at students' work. There is a spirit of mutual teamwork within the school. Staff are confident enough to share possible difficulties and seek solutions together.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The New Dorp School (PS 041)	∅	✓	+
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.

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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