



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Joseph H Wade School**

**Intermediate School 117**

**1865 Morris Avenue**

**Bronx**

**NY 10453**

**Principal: Delice Jones**

**Dates of review: October 12-13 & 16, 2006**

**Reviewer: John Francis**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

This is a large middle school made up of four schools within a school, each with its own academic focus: Media Studies, Arts and Culture, a bi-lingual academy (RAICES) and the Wade Enrichment Preparatory Academy (WEPA), which began in 2004-2005 and serves higher achieving students. Each of the four academies has students from Grade 6 through 8. In all, 1085 students are enrolled. The structure provides students with continuity in their schooling through middle school. However, many of the classes are large - some with more than 35 students. The largest ethnic groups in school are Hispanic (78%) and Black (20%) with small numbers of other ethnic groups. A high proportion (33%) of students are English language learners (mainly Spanish speaking) and 13% are special education students. Attendance is below that of City and similar schools. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school offers a number of intervention programs before and during school and on Saturdays, where there are opportunities not only for students to catch up on their studies but also to experience a number of enrichment opportunities.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is well supported by the administration and leadership team and has a very clear vision for the school.
- The administration has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is working on the weaknesses to accelerate progress in whole school development.
- The collegial approach of the staff within the smaller schools is bringing a consistency and a shared understanding of the needs of the whole school complex.
- Dual language and home language instruction to support English language learners is helping them make faster progress than they would otherwise have made.
- High quality teaching is seen where teachers use a well planned workshop model that is clearly based on their knowledge of students' needs.
- Data is particularly well used to identify the needs of special education students and English language learners.
- The academic intervention service clearly identifies students' needs and prepares effective intervention programs to support their learning.
- Students are well supported through the wide range of informative, well-structured prompts and guidance produced and displayed by teachers in their classrooms.
- There is a positive culture, supported by the majority of students, which is seen in their enjoyment of learning and response to instruction.

### What the school needs to improve

- Build the capacity of the staff to use all forms of data to inform curriculum decisions and bring consistency to instructional planning.
- Use data more effectively at classroom level to improve differentiation in teachers' planning and instruction and to provide a closer alignment of work to students' needs.
- Set targets from formative assessments and conferencing to inform teachers' day-to-day planning to produce a response to the immediate short-term needs of students in their class.
- Develop targets and expectations for all subjects at the end of each marking period or topic to monitor students' progress and share these with the students.
- Identify and target the specific weaknesses of those students who are close to the grade level boundaries to raise the school's overall achievement in English language arts and mathematics.
- Move from whole-school professional development to a more targeted and differentiated approach based on the identified needs of individual teachers.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

**This is an undeveloped school with areas of proficiency.**

The school has recently made a number of significant changes to its curriculum, assessments and the way it gathers and uses data. However, many of these improvements are too recent to be able to evaluate their impact. While the school is proficient in some aspects of its work, there are some important deficiencies that are hindering more rapid progress. The school has much useful data collected from a range of sources but this is not used consistently across the school and within the academies and, as a result, there are some marked variations in the effectiveness of teachers across and within the academies and faculties. The school knows that it has some way to go in making good use of the data to establish effective assessments that will enable teachers to meet the different needs of students in the same class.

The principal and vice principals of the academies work well together, combining their strengths and interests for the benefit of the students. The staff also work together well to create a unified school that shares the same expectations.

### 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 undeveloped.**

The administration collects data and shares this regularly with teachers through, for example, academy meetings and grade conferences. There are useful systems that provide a breakdown of the data for teachers, such as the 'class at a glance' records, but even here the data does not make clear what is being compared at each test period. The school's summative data show that performance for most students is well below grade level in all subject areas. Achievement at Grade 7 drops sharply and is significantly below that of either Grade 6 or 8. This means that Grade 8 teachers start from a much lower position than they would normally expect. Some of this lack of achievement also comes from teachers not being aware of what their students can already do or what they particularly need to work on to improve. Data analysis in all subjects are not sufficiently well developed to improve overall achievement or instruction, including a more accurate alignment of instructional planning to students' needs and further calibration of judgments on standards reached by students. Staff members do not yet have the capacity to make the best use of all forms of data to inform longer-term curriculum and instructional planning.

As well as the data gathered by the administration, some teachers collect and organize their own. Where teachers gather data themselves it is generally used effectively to accelerate students' learning. However, this is not consistently practiced by all teachers, nor is it used well enough to differentiate instruction in their short-term planning. Neither is it being analyzed well enough to monitor students' progress. For example, insufficient thought has been given to how changes in instructional practice would enable students

working close to the grade level boundaries, such as those with scale scores at high level 2, to aspire to level 3.

**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 proficient.**

Some teachers effectively use data to track students’ progress and set individual goals, but it is not consistent practice. Data is used proficiently to identify the needs of special education students and English language learners. Special education staff clearly identify students’ needs and prepare appropriate intervention programs to support their learning. The well-planned program of support for English language learners through home language instruction in the RAICES academy is helping them make faster progress than they would otherwise have made.

One valuable strategy seen across all the academies is that in most classrooms students are well supported by a wide range of informative, well-structured prompts and guidance produced by teachers and students which are displayed around the room. These provide instant references and additional support to students without continual input from the teacher, and help students to know what they need to do to produce good work.

There is a positive culture, supported by the majority of students, that is seen in their enjoyment of learning and response to instruction. The school struggles to involve many parents in supporting the education of their children. However, the parent coordinator is working hard through the parent teacher association, parent workshops and through the school leadership team to improve this. The use of translators at meetings, and dual language newsletters, are helpful approaches to support the high proportion of parents who are not fluent in English.

**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.**

There is much good cooperative work going on within each of the four academies that is beginning to produce well-developed curricular plans with clear scope and sequence. Good work is seen where subject teachers have produced a detailed curriculum that breaks down, for example, reading and writing workshops into a series of lessons, each with its own rubric to evaluate students’ progress. A similarly helpful document has also been produced for mathematics. The recently created instructional team is driving forward initiatives on curriculum and planning that focus clearly on improving instruction and achievement.

The curriculum is further enhanced by the links being made between the different subjects to consolidate and extend the skills being taught, particularly in English language arts. This is work in progress but early indications are that this is beginning to provide a detailed approach to curriculum planning across the school. What the other subjects are currently lacking are regular assessment points also based on agreed rubrics, laying out the small steps students need to achieve the grade levels. Sharing these with the students would

involve them more actively in assessing their own performance. At present, the lack of these is an obstacle to teachers, regardless of grade level, aligning their curriculum more accurately to the needs of all their students.

Students respond well to their teachers and behavior is generally good. High quality teaching is seen in which teachers use a well-planned workshop model that is clearly based on their knowledge of students' needs. For example, in a social studies class where students were exploring the characteristics of a hero through the story of Gilgamesh, the teacher used his knowledge of students' achievement very effectively in planning. This produced a close alignment of work to build on students' prior knowledge and skills and resulted in good quality discussion and high quality cooperative group work among the students. However, there is not enough teaching of this caliber seen consistently across the school to universally provide differentiation and alignment of the curriculum to the needs of students at all levels. The school has more to do in adapting instruction to actively engage students more closely. Where this is happening, students respond well and make more rapid progress. In addition, short-term target setting from teachers' formative assessments, daily grading and day-to-day conferencing lacks rigor and does not inform their planning sufficiently well enough to overcome the barriers to learning experienced by students in their classes.

The school has a number of effective strategies to encourage regular attendance. While the average rate of attendance is slightly below that of similar and City schools, it continues to rise.

**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.**

The principal is respected by students who feel that she is enthusiastic and 'wants kids to learn'. Her leadership, along with the assistant principals and the collegial approach of the staff within the smaller academies, is bringing consistency and a shared understanding of the needs of the whole school complex. However, not all the teams are using the available information to move practice forward. Management systems work smoothly. Teachers give generously of their time, such as their summer school curriculum revisions, and work well together. There are proficient systems for the recruitment and selection of teachers that also involve other agencies.

The principal and assistant principals make regular visits to classes and there is a helpful format for recording these observations that focuses clearly on the workshop model of instruction. Teacher observations have enabled the principal to develop an understanding of strengths and weaknesses in instruction and students' learning. This data is enabling the schools' leadership to compare performance and begin to address differences. These have been more successful in some areas than others. The English and mathematics coaches also receive this information, which is being used to inform professional development.

There are regular opportunities for professional development but much of this has been in mandated areas or on more generic topics. The school has started to move from whole school professional development to a more targeted and differentiated approach based on the identified needs of teachers, but has some way to go. There is not yet a consistently strong link between how evaluations are used to drive improvement, for example, the drop

in achievement at Grade 7. There are many recently introduced systems that have not been in operation for sufficient time to evaluate their impact.

**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 undeveloped.**

The principal is well supported by the cabinet and leadership team and has a very clear vision for the school. The administration has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is working on the weaknesses to move progress in whole school development.

The school is effective in monitoring and evaluating its plans in relation to those students in the greatest need of support, particularly through the work of the academic intervention services. While the support for English language learners is generally good, there remains an area of weakness in the testing modifications for English language learners in general education, for example, extended time, or where directions are read and reread to them. While these rubrics are followed during exam periods, this important information is not carried into everyday instruction where it could be applied and used to support these students who have been clearly identified as having a specific learning need. The principal acknowledges that through monitoring, the administration gathers information about the effectiveness of individual members of staff. This monitoring shows there is insufficient rigor and objectivity in the way teachers use comparative data. As a result, too much of the work is common to all students and is not sufficiently well aligned to their different ages, needs or capabilities. This slows students' learning and limits their achievement. Where instruction is well aligned to students' needs and interests, students apply themselves more productively and, consequently, perform at a higher level.

The school is still developing specific targets and expectations for all subjects at the end of each marking period or topic. Until this is achieved, it is difficult to monitor students' progress closely during the year or to share targets with the students to give them a clearer view of what they need to do to achieve more highly.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Joseph H Wade School (IS 117)</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>	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"> <li>• ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students*</li> </ul>		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"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>	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		
<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.		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	
<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>	∅	✓	+
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>	∅	✓	+
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>	∅	✓	+
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		