



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Henry Street School for International Studies

Middle/High School 292

**220 Henry Street
New York
NY 10002**

Principal: Hoa Tu

Dates of review: March 19 - 20, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Nick Butt

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Henry Street School for International Studies is a middle/high school with 510 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 33% Black, 54% Hispanic, 2% White and 11% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 26% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 86.1%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 95% eligibility.

The school shares a building with two other middle schools and occupies the fourth floor and part of the third floor. In 2008, its first cohort of grade 12 students will graduate.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The administration's clear vision for the school is rooted firmly in promoting educational excellence.
- Teachers gather and interpret data using unified systems that promote consistency and aid dialogue about student progress.
- The school supports students in greatest need of improvement very well in achieving their goals.
- The advisory system creates numerous opportunities for teachers to share with students how they can improve.
- The school's international perspective adds depth and enrichment to its curricular approaches.
- Positive relationships between students and staff promote a climate of trust and respect.
- The school offers a highly effective system of differentiated professional development for its teachers.
- Teachers share good practice openly and collaborate together well in improving their instruction.
- There are good procedures for evaluating how well teachers are progressing toward their professional development goals.
- Effective partnerships with a wide range of organizations support students' personal and academic development.

What the school needs to improve

- Analyze in more depth the school's past performance, especially at grade and subject level.
- Use data from similar schools to highlight areas of students' performance to investigate further.
- Set longer-term academic goals for all students and measure progress towards them.
- Ensure all teachers consistently differentiate their instruction to meet students' learning needs, particularly for higher achievers.
- Develop systems further to promote a shared approach among all staff in upholding discipline.
- Continue to improve attendance and punctuality.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Henry Street School for International Studies has as its motto, “Think globally, act locally.” and furnishes its hallways with the flags of the world. The international dimension is central to the school’s vision for educating its students. Some students have had the opportunity to visit Morocco and others are due to visit Spain, thus forging links with youth across the world. The school benefits from its relatively small size, in that students are well known to staff. The advisory system further strengthens the good relationships that exist, with each teacher taking a particular interest in the personal and academic development of their students. As the numbers have risen, space is at a premium, and this sometimes causes difficulties with scheduling and staff workspace. The behavior policy is not consistently applied by all staff, which leads to some confusion about where the boundaries for students lie.

Since the last review, good progress has been made in analyzing sub groups according to ethnicity and gender, but there are still issues to develop further, particularly in improving attendance and in meeting the needs of higher achieving students. The school also has more work to do in reviewing its past performance for trends across grades and for using its data to make comparisons with similar schools. Teachers use a common system to monitor the progress of their students, and this enables them to hold useful discussions across grades and departments. Those students in greatest need of improvement do well, because effective plans are drawn up for them and challenging goals set. This has particularly benefited students at risk of not graduating in taking Regents and making up credits. While the school sets effective short-term goals for the rest of its students, it does not yet look ahead sufficiently, such as in setting year-end targets.

The inquiry team has made a good start in identifying a group of grade 9 students to follow, with a focus on building their vocabulary and understanding of non-fiction texts. An innovative program has been set up to support these students and their progress is being tracked closely. Already there are strategies emerging that could be applied to the students as a whole, especially in the way lessons are paced to keep students motivated. Instruction across the school is variable, with some outstanding practice that engages students very well and meets their learning needs precisely. In other lessons, teaching can be pedestrian and unchallenging, especially for the higher-achieving students. School leaders have put in place a thorough program of professional development that sets clear goals for all teachers, and is differentiated effectively according to need. The principal and assistant principals’ own expertise in instruction complements the work of the directors of instruction and the coaches in offering teachers high quality support.

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 the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Teachers gather an appropriate range of data, introducing some new electronic diagnostic tests in the past year, which deepen their understanding of students' progress. More than a quarter of the school population are special education students and the school pays particular attention to their needs, ensuring they are allocated to a class best suited to them, based on interpretation of data. This works successfully and has improved since the last review. A similar level of care goes into assessing English language learners. The effectiveness of after school programs for these students is monitored closely. Through its analysis, the school has identified Chinese boys as a sub-group that is underperforming, and has put in place additional support to help them integrate and thrive. There is a greater understanding of how students are performing at classroom and grade level, but not enough comparison is made with trends over time. The principal is active in meeting with other principals and considering common interests, but this does not generally focus on data, and many of the schools chosen are not that similar. All teachers use a common monitoring system, which aids discussion of individuals across grades and departments, because they are familiar with how it is presented.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Teachers meet frequently at grade and departmental level, and leaders meet with grade and departmental leaders monthly to monitor progress over time. Meetings follow a common format that ensures each student's performance is reviewed, with the greatest emphasis placed on those most in need of improvement. This way nobody "falls through the cracks." Teachers are adept at setting short-term goals for students but do not tend to plan for the longer-term unless the student has particular needs. There is an effective advisory system that enables teachers to give good guidance to students, whom they meet daily, setting both personal and academic goals with them in a "personalized learning plan". The work of the inquiry team in focusing on underachieving grade 9 students, and of high school teachers in helping to ensure seniors graduate successfully, is particularly effective. These students, who are most in need of improvement, are set challenging goals and steps put in place to accelerate their learning.

The senior leadership team ensures the whole school community shares its improvement goals and is involved in accomplishing them. This year there is a drive to strengthen the school culture and improve communication systems. The school has generally high expectations of its students, although these are not always communicated consistently, especially to incoming ninth graders. Advisers share information with students well and keep parents abreast of their progress.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school aligns its curriculum around the requirements of the State and City tests and makes modifications that target deficiencies revealed by data. A whole-school focus this year is upon the use of literacy in all content areas, particularly vocabulary and non-fiction texts for grade 9 living environments. The work of the inquiry team has been useful here in trying out some new approaches that engage and motivate students in their language work. The quality of teaching is variable across the school, although there is some exemplary instruction. A problem-solving project for grade 6 math saw students designing packaging to export hard balls around the world that would maximize their profits. This employed a wide range of mathematical skills and had a literacy component too, as students had to devise a logo and an advertising campaign for their product. Students were inspired by the challenge and were engrossed in their work.

The school’s international perspective enriches its curriculum, with global conferencing and model United Nations involvement, as well as trips abroad. There is, however, limited choice for individual grades in what electives they can take, partly because of the small size of the school and the lack of space. Students are able to experience film studies, international relations, music, advance literature, Mandarin and art. Teachers are held to account for the progress their students make, and the principal and assistant principal have high expectations of instruction. Their vision is not yet fully realized, as differentiated instruction is not consistent across the school and in some classrooms the higher achieving students are not challenged enough. Great care goes into appointing staff whose strengths mesh with the school’s needs, for example in advancing literacy. The school is currently grappling with the prospect of budget cuts.

The school’s relatively small size promotes a culture of trust, aided by the advisory system. One senior said, “It feels like a second home to me. I learnt to appreciate who I am and what I could be.” Students appreciate the willingness of staff to put themselves out for them, and the help they receive. Parents feel that the teachers are good role models. The school works hard to promote attendance, and has seen some gains, but its record is still below the Citywide average, mainly because of the persistent absence of a few individuals.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

“This is the greatest learning experience I’ve ever had,” a teacher commented, reflecting on the past four years from the school’s opening. Highly effective systems are in place to promote the professional development of staff. This is now having an impact on improving teaching and learning, even though some areas of inconsistency have still to be ironed out. Administrators set both short and long-term goals for teachers, each having their own “personal professional plan” based on priorities to develop. Differentiated coaching ensures all teachers receive the level of support commensurate

with their need, backed up by frequent observations and snapshots by the principal and assistant principal. The school embraces a culture of openly celebrating best practice, and using teachers as lead professionals in sharing their ideas. A teacher reflected, "Everybody's bringing something different to the table." Model lessons by directors of instruction and coaches offer further opportunities, especially for new teachers, to hone their skills. An effective program of induction and mentoring enables newly appointed teachers to settle quickly and to become familiar with the school's policies and procedures. New teachers join the established "critical friends' groups" where they can receive practical support and discuss wider issues.

There are good systems for promoting students' personal development coordinated by the guidance teams. A peer mediation program works well, with older students mentoring younger ones. A discipline "think-tank" has helped to set priorities and non-negotiables, with the assistant principal taking a lead role. The school's behavior policy is clear, but is not yet applied consistently by all staff, meaning that sometimes staff do not receive the information they need about a student's behavior, or that students occasionally receive mixed messages about their conduct. The school enjoys many productive partnerships with outside organizations to enhance its programs, most notably its lead partner, the Asia Society.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Teachers use quarterly assessments well to monitor students' progress and make adjustments to plans and programs in the light of data analysis. Much of their work is focused on a relatively short period of time and they do not yet review progress towards longer-term goals so that they can have a broader overview of students' learning. In contrast, professional development goals for teachers are set for the year end, and their growth towards them is evaluated at interim intervals, so that the rate of improvement becomes clear. The school thus demonstrates effectively its aim of "a culture that's continuously learning" in its development of its staff.

Regular grade and departmental meetings ensure teachers respond promptly to the messages data gives them. The school's focus on literacy in all content areas arose from the evidence that students were struggling with text in other papers such as social studies and living environments. School leaders take a wider view of the data to make strategic changes, for example in looking at the grading policy and in setting up the discipline think-tank. The school leadership team reviews the goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan at its monthly meetings and the school's consultation committee considers what this means in practice on a day-to-day basis for students and staff. Students come from all over the City to attend the school. As one commented, "You learn more than just the four corners of your neighborhood." The principal and the assistant principal live out their vision each day, and are seeing the fruits of better progress and more honors students, as the school stays true to its international roots.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Henry Street School for International Studies	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score			X		

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?			X		
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?			X		
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?			X		
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?		X			
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?		X			
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X		

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?			X		
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?			X		
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X		

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?			X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?			X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?			X		
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?		X			
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?			X		
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?			X		
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?			X		
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					X

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped