



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**University Neighborhood School**

**High School 448  
200 Munroe Street  
New York  
NY 10002**

**Principal: Mr. Robert Miller**

**Dates of review: January 10 - 11, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Gerald Griffin**

## Content of the report

### **Part 1: The School Context**

Information about the school

### **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well  
What the school needs to improve

### **Part 3: Main Findings**

Progress made since the last review  
Overall evaluation  
How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

### **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

University Neighborhood School is a high school with 533 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 17% Black, 54% Hispanic, 4% White, and 24% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 87.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 72% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is highly visible and proactive around the school and in the community, and articulates clearly his vision for continuing whole-school improvement.
- The school develops students' self-esteem and their expectations so that they become successful learners.
- Effective systems identify and improve the performance of students who fall behind with their work.
- A broad range of curricular activity engages students so that most are keen to come to school and learn.
- The performance of teachers is regularly checked and they are given well-focused support so that they can improve their teaching.
- Students receive good guidance, which has a positive impact on their attendance and their academic, personal and social development.
- The school uses data well to identify areas that need extra resources for their development.
- Communication with parents is good and they feel well informed and involved in their children's education.

### What the school needs to improve

- Analyze the performance data of ethnic groups so that the school can plan appropriate programs that meet their specific needs.
- Set clear, measurable goals for each student so that students, teachers and parents can measure interim progress towards them.
- Provide more training for teachers in the use of data to plan differentiated work that matches the needs of all students and so accelerate progress.
- Ensure teachers consistently enable all students to talk about themes and thoughts in class and group discussions before writing their ideas independently.
- Make better use of data to evaluate the progress and outcomes of strategic and academic improvement plans.
- Increase the frequency of leadership team reviews of strategic goals and initiatives so that modifications are undertaken in a timely manner.

## 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.**

The principal has high expectations of students, staff and parents. His clear vision, communicated to all members of the school community, inspires students, teachers and staff to give of their best. Students enjoy high levels of guidance and support and they make good strides in their emotional growth and well-being. The school recognizes that many students start high school with low aspirations and it works hard to raise students' self-esteem and personal ambition. This is a difficult challenge, but the school's success is seen in increasing graduation rates and the number of students moving on to college. Students find the curriculum and lessons relevant, motivating and interesting. Relationships between students and with staff are generally positive. As a result, students have high self-esteem, enjoy their lessons and are keen to learn. Teachers do not always take enough account of what students already know and can do. This means some work is too easy while other students struggle with work that is too difficult. Instruction is effective in improving students' reading and, in particular, their understanding of the text. However, there are not enough opportunities to write independently and in some classes students copy the teacher's notes rather than record their own ideas. Effective induction support means that new teachers get off to a good start in their careers. Well-structured professional development for staff focuses on how planning and classroom practice can accelerate student progress. Teachers and faculties use data to check regularly the progress of students. Where progress slows, effective measures are taken to ensure students catch up. While the school has well-defined institutional goals, individual student goals are not clear enough to enable students, teachers and parents to measure the amount of progress students are making. The inquiry team has made progress in investigating the effectiveness of English language arts intervention for some 9th grade students. The school has made good progress since the last review in providing support to teachers in the teaching of literacy and some progress in the other improvement areas.

### **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.**

Each teacher has an assessment binder containing information about student achievement in his or her subject. This data includes results from State and school tests in English language arts, math and attendance. The binder is updated regularly at each

report period to allow teachers to track progress closely and to quickly identify progress that is too slow. This leads to remedial action by the faculty and intervention services.

The school has set up systems to enable the school to compare the performance of students from year to year. The school separately monitors and follows the progress of English language learners, special education students and general education students. It uses this information to plan a curriculum that is appropriate to their needs. This includes providing extra tuition for individual students out of class and additional support for small groups in the class.

The school looks closely for any differential achievement of boys and girls and so knows that girls perform better than boys in English language arts. Teachers are discussing ways of providing a curriculum that meets the differing needs of boys and girls although this is not yet consistent practice across the school. The school is reluctant to measure the progress of different ethnic groups. This means that it does not modify the curriculum to reflect the varying interests of students from different ethnic backgrounds. The school regularly compares its performance with similar schools and carefully analyzes the results. While the school takes comfort from its favorable academic comparisons, it recognizes that its suspension levels are higher than those in similar schools and is actively seeking ways of reducing the number.

**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.**

The school has well-established procedures that include representatives from all members of the school community to agree its goals for improving student achievement. Teachers and intervention services work hard to improve students’ low self-esteem and poor attitudes when they first join the school. As a result, behavior and attendance significantly improve as students move up the school. The school does not provide explicit goals for each student although it expects them to achieve well. This means students are not clear about their expected level in each course at the end of the year.

The school responds well to students who are in greatest need of improvement. Regular testing quickly identifies them and their needs. For example, 9th grade students who are underachieving in math are identified within two weeks of entering the school and receive effective one-to-one academic intervention to help them improve any shortcomings. Extra tutoring at lunchtime, after school and on Saturday helps students quickly catch up missed work and develop their skills so that they can make better progress.

Parents are clear about the school’s high expectations for their children’s achievement, behavior and attendance. Regular report cards and telephone messages inform parents about their children’s progress. Parents feel confident contacting the school because they know their views are welcomed and that their concerns will usually be quickly and effectively resolved.

**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 curriculum is broad and includes all mandated programs. The arts are represented very well through art, music and dance. The mandatory curriculum is extended through lunchtime, after-school and Saturday lessons and many popular clubs that enhance academic studies and broaden students' aspirations. Teachers make the work interesting and engaging by choosing work that is often relevant and appealing to students. This ensures that they generally enjoy lessons and are keen to come to school

Literacy is a key focus of the school. Teachers are making good progress in developing strategies to improve students' understanding of what they read. For example, students reflect on the meaning of passages and predict what they expect to happen next in the story. To improve writing, students are encouraged to talk through their ideas in class before writing them down. However, not all students participate in these discussions and there are not enough opportunities for students to clarify their thoughts in small groups. While there are clear signs that writing is improving, in a minority of classes students passively copy work from the board. Teachers do not use data often enough to plan work that meets the different needs of students in their class because they do not take sufficient account of what students can already do. This means that progress sometimes slows because higher achieving students are given work of too low a level while slower students are given work that is too hard.

The school puts due emphasis on students' social and emotional development. It fosters an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect through the curriculum and through personal attention from staff. Very high priority is placed on attendance. Many students start high school with poor records of attendance. The school works very effectively with them and their parents to improve their percentages. As a result, attendance improves year on year so that by the time students leave it is higher than the City averages.

**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 proficient**

The principal has a high profile around the school and checks the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms on a daily basis. Additionally, there are effective measures that formally assess the quality of instruction. After observations, teachers are given very constructive feedback on their strengths and areas for development to help them improve their practice. There is plenty of well-focused help and extra reviews for teachers whose classes show students are making slower progress.

The school uses data well to target professional development activities. For example, the school employed a consultant to improve team teaching in special education classes because analysis of data showed that special education students were making slower than expected progress.

There are good opportunities for teachers to observe colleagues at work in the classroom. These visits are highly focused on the specific needs of the visiting teacher so that they can note good practice to use in their own lesson planning. The school and external advisors provide very effective support for new teachers and for those new to the school.

The school's specialist services provide good support for students who need extra help to learn and to gain social skills. School procedures are well known and consistently implemented. As a result, most students have positive attitudes and behave well, and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. To remedy the high number of suspensions, additional staff have been brought in to support students who have behavior difficulties, and the number of students who re-offend is starting to drop. The school has close links with local community groups, and these have a very positive impact on students' personal and academic development. The school benefits from its partnership with the University of New York. It trains student teachers with the school of education, and uses many of its lecturers to advise and help teachers improve their classroom practice. The school also works effectively with police youth officers on initiatives such as "Project Unity" to promote good citizenship.

**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.**

The principal takes a personal interest in the academic and personal welfare of every student. His enthusiasm for school is infectious and staff, students and parents share his eagerness and vision for success. There are systems in place to monitor the scores of test results to ensure students are making the required progress. Monitoring is undertaken by individual teachers and by faculties and this system is effective in picking up students who are making less than expected gains. However, the school does not collate this data into measures of class, grade and subject interim and long-term achievement, so it is not able to measure objectively if it is on track to meet its overall school goals.

Providing extra resources for professional development and the reduction of suspensions shows the school uses data well to inform strategic decisions. However, the school is not always clear about the ongoing progress of the strategies so that it can take timely action to modify its plans if necessary. This is because review meetings are not frequent enough and available interim data is not always analyzed.

Teachers are not consistently provided with interim goals for their classes' progress. While coaches quickly spot slower progress, the process does not readily identify coasting classes. Some departments, such as science, analyze test results to measure the effectiveness of programs and instructional practices. They use the outcomes to modifying planning by ensuring they incorporate the aspects of teaching that have proved successful.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: University Neighborhood School</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>			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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			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 demanding, 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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			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?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X		

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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?			X		
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			<b>X</b>		

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			<b>X</b>		

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>