



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Manhattan Occupational Training Center**

**High School 721**

**250 West Houston Street  
New York  
NY 10014**

**Principal: Carol Brady-Joyce**

**Dates of review: May 12 - 13, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Ronnie Young**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Manhattan Occupational Training Center is a high school with 260 students from grade 9 through grade 12+. The school population comprises 30% Black, 56% Hispanic, 6% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 61% of the students enrolled and girls account for 39%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 83.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 73% eligibility.

The school is a District 75 alternative high school comprised of the main site, two inclusion high school sites at Chelsea High School and Legacy High School and two additional high school off-sites, one located within the District 75 headquarters, and one at Stuyvesant High School. All students are aged from 14 to 21 and present with a number of disabilities including mental retardation, pervasive developmental disorders, and multiple disabilities. There are a small number of students with learning disabilities and emotional challenges. All students participate in New York State Alternative Assessment, other than those students attending the general education high school inclusion classes.

The school has 17 worksites that supported and prepared 85 students for the world of work this year.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has a very good knowledge of the performance, progress and potential of every student.
- The school has an effective program of partnerships with worksites that focuses on individual students to equip them for life after school.
- The staff, parents and students have very high expectations of themselves and of each other.
- The school has excellent relationships with parents, enhanced by effective communications.
- There is a broad and motivational curriculum, enhanced by the arts and sports, and a strong emphasis on vocational development.
- Inspirational leadership by the principal has motivated teaching staff to embrace change.
- There are effective procedures in place to encourage attendance and punctuality.
- Teachers are practiced at using diagnostic measures and are quick to revise plans and practice when necessary.
- The teaching staff are highly committed to the success of their students and totally accountable for classroom practice.
- Newly introduced teaching methodologies have enhanced student participation and achievement.

### What the school needs to improve

- Disaggregate data by ethnic group to ensure that appropriate responses can be made to different cultural attitudes to disability.
- Compare the school with others that are similar, to identify and share good practice.
- Ensure all lessons are differentiated by task and individual needs.
- Pay close attention to restoring high levels of trust between students and a minority of staff.
- Clarify the school's vision so it becomes the driving force for change across the whole of the school community.
- Work with teachers in setting and monitoring personal goals to enhance their own development.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### Progress made since the last review

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

### Overall Evaluation

#### This school is proficient

When the current principal took over her post in September 2007, the school had a curriculum with a strong academic bias. This was too difficult for the majority of students who became stressed, unmotivated, and lost trust in many teachers. The principal has worked hard to improve relationships and to adapt the curriculum so it better fits the needs of the students. She introduced vocational skills and a transition program for smooth transference into the world of work. She has also initiated new methodologies, which bring strict routines and structures into classrooms. This has resulted in less difficult behaviors from students, creating a more positive learning environment for everyone. Her inspirational leadership has motivated teaching staff to embrace these changes, and the new direction has enhanced student participation and achievement. The principal has prioritized attendance this year and it has improved as a result.

Students now have individualized programs which contain arts, sports and skills for life, including travel training. Program design is based on continuously collected data. The school has close relationships with parents and there are high expectations throughout the school. Teachers feel wholly accountable for student achievement and conscientiously revise plans and strategies when necessary. They have a very good knowledge of the progress and performance of their students and carefully collect, analyze and use data to formulate student goals. However, the school does not yet disaggregate assessment data by ethnic group, so it cannot respond to different cultural attitudes to disability. Good practice is not yet shared as the school does not compare itself with similar schools and teachers do not observe each other's classroom practice. Equally, the principal's vision is not clear to all the school community. All these aspects are hampering improvements.

The inquiry team works well and is focusing on a class which is piloting a new methodology. The school has made good progress since the last review; goal setting is now more precise and the curriculum has been enriched by art and music. The emphasis on individual students' needs has improved instruction and learning and teachers are beginning to differentiate instruction more effectively.

## **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.**

The school has amassed very good information about the performance and progress of all its students. Classroom activities and a variety of formal and informal sources provide data, including the Brigance assessments, individualized educational programs, attendance data and New York State Alternative Assessment results. The principal is piloting the use of individual student binders as currently staff keep data in teacher binders. The school has prioritized data collection analysis and use for ongoing professional development, together with support from the administration so that staff can track students more effectively.

English language learners have specialized assessment, wherever possible. There are three bilingual classes in the school and they study native language arts as opposed to English language arts. There is also free-standing teaching of English as a second language, both pull-out and push-in. Spanish native speakers take the Brigance assessment in Spanish and the school employs paraprofessionals who speak Spanish and some who speak Asian languages. This has been helpful for those students who are new to the country and also have speech and language disabilities. The school does not analyze student achievement by ethnic group, however, even though the principal has noticed different attitudes to disability amongst the various cultures in the school. This means the school is not able to offer differing support to meet students' needs.

The school has begun to track its own and students' performance year on year with the introduction of the new curriculum, but does not presently compare itself to similar schools, as there are no exactly similar schools within the city. It is in the process of finding schools with similar populations so it can identify and share good practice.

**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 focuses on students individually to prepare them for life after school, both in its classroom activities and at the work sites. Staff set, and closely follow, student goals based on Brigance assessments and individualized educational programs. Formal collaboration between staff is difficult, due to scheduling restrictions, but they work informally together, at lunchtimes or after school, to plan programs for students that will meet their individual needs.

The new principal has raised the expectations of staff, parent and students. Because the new curriculum is better targeted at students' needs and capabilities, achievement and self-esteem have increased and students are now more motivated to succeed. Goals are now challenging but realistic and shared with parents, who are kept regularly

informed of how they can help their children to achieve. Staff are optimistic about students' success and can see the value of goal setting as it drives forward student progress.

The school has effective communications with parents, whom it regards as partners in the education of their children. Over a third of parents are active participants in school activities, helped by interpreters in all the community languages. The parent coordinator is influential in drawing parents into the school and often visits their homes, as do the guidance counselors when necessary. The school provides well-attended workshops for parents, such as one on guardianship for when students reach the age of majority. The school encourages parents constantly to give information about students and there is a variety of communication tools available, including notebooks, which travel between school and home, newsletters and bulletins, telephone calls and the school's open-door policy.

**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 well developed**

The school has devised a totally relevant and engaging curriculum that closely meets the individual needs and capabilities of its students, including travel training and transition activities. The latter enable students to travel independently from school to post-school adult services and the world of work. In addition, an effective in-school job preparation program has been implemented where students learn useful vocational skills such as clerical duties and property maintenance activities. A wide range of arts and sports are offered both in and after the school day. Students are happy with the new curriculum. One said, "Last year it was boring and too hard. I thought I was stupid. This year it is much better and interesting."

Previous difficulties with the curriculum led to some students becoming stressed and adversely affected their relationships with teaching staff. This resulted in a loss of trust. The school recognizes this problem and is exploring ways to restore harmonious relationships between all staff and students.

Improving attendance has been a school priority this year. Telephone calls are made on each day of absence, students' homes are visited when required and incentives have been introduced for students with 100% attendance. They have changed the attitude of many parents and students and attendance is slowly improving.

Most teachers are now using data effectively to plan differentiated work for students, but this is not consistent across all staff. Nearly all teachers differentiate lessons for groups. They are beginning to meet individual needs, but some still focus too much on academic skills that are not appropriate for the abilities of the students.

There is an excellent program of work experience at 17 sites across the city for 85 students aged 18 or over. This enables students to work at real jobs in real locations such as Veterans Hospital, where they undertake employment such as reception work, filing, maintenance and warehousing. This valuable experience has resulted in many students finding paid employment on leaving school.

**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**

Teachers are highly committed to the success of students, and feel totally accountable for what happens to their students and in the classroom. The principal has motivated and energized teaching staff who are keen to be involved in working more effectively with their students. Scheduling issues have made intervisitation of classes difficult in the past, but it is now encouraged between classrooms and the other sites, and other schools, where possible. This, along with close collaboration with related services staff, has helped staff work better together as a team. All upcoming professional development will be differentiated, based on teacher observations and the staff's aspirations.

The school has built supportive relationships with a number of outside bodies that enhance and extend students' opportunities and experience. Examples are PSAL (the Public Schools Athletic League), which provides the before and after school sports program, and VESID (Vocational and Educational Service for Individuals with Difficulties), which assists with the placing of students in employment after school. The community worksites include the New York Public Library, Veterans' Hospital and Village Nursing Home.

Rigorously implemented procedures and policies at the school keep the school running smoothly. The strategic bulletin is sent out electronically every morning and it is displayed in the main office. Monthly faculty conferences keep staff informed and there are regular lunchtime staff meetings. There is a well-defined organizational chart with roles and responsibilities clearly explained. Staff work totally consistently and the principal monitors this consistency closely.

**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 well developed.**

Teachers use diagnostic assessments such as Brigance and individual education plans expertly and quickly revise plans and strategies where necessary. When the TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Communication Handicapped Children) methods were introduced into the pilot class, staff immediately embraced the strict organization, routines and visual clues that are implicit in this way of teaching and learning. All plans for student goals are drawn from individualized educational programs, so they are measurable and time limited. The school does not yet set measurable goals with timescales to improve teacher outcomes.

The principal has a clear vision for the school but this has not been fully shared with all staff, parents and students. Her vision is to infuse academic education with vocational elements via the transition model and data-driven entrepreneurship. Parents and students know and are pleased about the vocational aspect and the staff welcome the change. Because the vision is not yet shared, though, it is not instrumental in moving the school forward.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Manhattan Occupational Training Center</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.**

<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .</b>	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.**

<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .</b>	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	
<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.**

<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	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	
<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, 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	
<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>