



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Walter H. Crowley Intermediate School**

**Middle School 005**

**50-40 Jacobson Street  
Queens  
NY 11373**

**Principal: Debra L. Van Nostrand**

**Dates of review: May 19 - 21, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Bruce Berry**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Walter H. Crowley is a middle school with 1509 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 3% Black, 54% Hispanic, 4% White, and 40% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 94.7%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal's high-quality leadership has been instrumental in driving the vision for continuous school improvement.
- The leadership team is united in creating the momentum for improving student achievement.
- The teachers work well in teams and make excellent use of data to plan their curriculum and instruction.
- Data is used effectively at all levels to identify improvement areas for individual, groups and subgroups of students.
- Students in greatest need of improvement receive excellent support and, as a result, make very good progress in achievement.
- The broad curriculum, including a strong arts component, provides very good challenge, variety and interest for student learning.
- The students demonstrate enthusiasm, motivation and engagement in their learning.
- The parents have great praise for the quality of education and the range of enrichment opportunities available for their children.
- There is a highly respectful, caring and nurturing culture in the school.
- The students' enjoyment of their education is leading to high and improving attendance levels.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to streamline whole school improvement goal setting by building on students' projected growth in achievement from their present benchmark levels.
- Further refine strategic planning by including interim checkpoints to monitor progress in reaching long-term goals for improving student achievement.
- Further develop the consistency in the differentiation of instruction to provide more challenging learning opportunities for higher achieving students.

## 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 well developed.**

Since the last Quality Review, teachers have regular opportunities to meet and plan together. New teachers receive excellent support and guidance to assist their own learning and English language learners make good progress through the focused support they receive. The principal provides high-quality leadership, ably supported by a strong leadership team, to drive the vision for continuous school improvement. This is enhanced by the impressive teamwork of all the teachers in planning their curriculum and instruction. Together they generate a caring and respectful culture, which provides a safe and supportive environment for student learning. The students, for their part, demonstrate high levels of self-discipline, enthusiasm and interest in their learning. The wide and varied curriculum, including a strong arts component, provides the vehicle for engaging students in their learning and improving their achievement outcomes. Teachers receive excellent support in developing their skills, knowledge and expertise in their curriculum and instruction practice. However, there is not yet a consistent approach to the differentiation of instruction in some classrooms to provide the necessary levels of challenge for high achieving students. Teachers use data extremely well to monitor student progress and to inform their planning. At present, however, the school does not set interim goals by which to monitor the progress in reaching their long-term student improvement goals. The parents receive regular valuable updates on the children's progress in all subjects. They speak highly of the quality of the communications between the school and home, as well as the academic support and social care their children receive in the school. The inquiry team activities had a major impact on a group of grade 7 English language learners when 90% of the students moved up one level, having been at the same level for the past three years.

### **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 well developed.**

Senior leaders and teachers use data effectively to monitor the progress in achievement of all students, classrooms, grades and subjects. Teachers receive benchmark data at the start of each year to enable them to review student progress over time. They get valuable training and are confident in using Acuity to identify specific skills in need of further improvement for individual and groups of students. Teams of teachers

disaggregate the Acuity data by different sub-groups in order to compare their performance in each skill area. Together with the annual State test data, they make excellent use of their findings to identify any significant differences in the performance of sub-groups and use this information effectively to plan their curriculum and instruction.

Special education students receive very good support and make excellent progress in their achievement levels. The teachers are successfully using a variety of programs to accelerate student progress. The impact of this is evidenced by the high percentage of special education students making gains in their scale scores in the recent English language arts State tests. English language learners make excellent progress as a result of the well-planned assistance they receive. The school has two newcomer classes for non-English speaking students. They make rapid progress in acquiring English through the good-quality teaching they receive and the effective use of technology to support their learning. Senior leaders and teachers regularly make valuable visits to similar schools in their network in order to share good practice, undertake research together and take part in shared professional development.

**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 well developed.**

The school’s plans contain measurable goals for improving student outcomes. However, these goals are imposed on the school and are not yet streamlined sufficiently to identify the students’ projected growth in achievement in each subject from their present benchmark levels. Each student reviews their own strengths and areas for improvement at the end of each unit of work. They conference with the teacher and agree learning goals in areas identified for improvement. Acuity is used very effectively to identify the performance of students across classrooms, grades and subjects. Senior leaders hold valuable conferences with teachers where their students’ subject performance is below that of the average for the grade. Data is analyzed and strategies agreed for addressing the identified areas of improvement. The school provides excellent support for the students in greatest need of improvement, which results in them making very good progress in their achievement levels. Teachers plan effective programs to help the students within and beyond the school day. The academic intervention team creates useful action plans to support identified students and regularly monitors their progress.

Very high expectations are generated by all sections of the school community. This is demonstrated most effectively by the students’ eagerness and enthusiasm for learning, which is a very strong feature in every classroom. Parents express praise for the support their children receive in school, as well as the high quality of the education and the wide range of enrichment courses available to their children. They receive valuable feedback, in their home language, on their children’s progress through the regular report cards and progress reports they receive. The school’s open door policy enables and encourages parents to share information, academic or personal, which may have an impact on their child’s education. The many workshops available for parents create further opportunities for parents to participate and learn about all aspects of the education and development of their child. Parents are further encouraged to be involved with the school through exciting events such as the recent evening of music, dance and food to celebrate the diverse and multicultural communities the school serves.

**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 core curriculum is aligned to State standards and pacing guides and it enables teachers to generate valuable data to monitor student progress. The school has three academies covering specialized areas in media and arts, science and technology and law and humanities. The students also have the opportunity to study from an excellent range of arts subjects, including drama, dance, vocal music, instrumental band and strings, visual arts, robotics and ballroom dancing. The school creates further valuable learning opportunities beyond the school day, which include a builders club, science Olympiad and a variety of other programs to capture the interests of the students. Those taking part in the ECON BOWL social studies competition against other schools were crowned champions this year following their impressive performance. The school organizes students into ability groupings in some subjects, with some higher achieving students successfully taking Regents tests in math and earth science in grade 8.

The leadership team effectively uses data to ensure that teachers are accountable for student progress. They have useful conferences with teachers when concerns about student progress are identified. This monitoring is reinforced by valuable observations and classroom walkthroughs. There is an effective and consistent structure for instructional practice across the school. Learning objectives are clearly defined and well understood by the students. Student engagement, enthusiasm and interest in their learning are very high in all classrooms. As one student said about their instruction, "It is challenging, so that we can exceed". Teachers effectively use data to plan for individual, group and whole class instruction. In some classrooms, the analysis of data leads to the restructuring of groupings based on the identified needs of the students. The students have highly focused and differentiated activities, which enable them to make excellent progress. However, there is not yet sufficient consistency in the differentiation of instruction in some classrooms to provide the necessary challenge and accelerated learning for the higher achieving students. The school budget is used efficiently to support the curriculum and instruction. For example, high-quality professional development was purchased for teachers to enhance their work in supporting English language learners. There is a wonderfully nurturing and respectful culture in the school, which creates a supportive learning environment. The high and improving attendance levels are further evidence of the engagement of students in their education.

**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.**

Regular observations and classroom walkthroughs provide effective monitoring of the quality of the curriculum and instruction. Teachers receive valuable feedback on their strengths and areas for improvement to enhance their practice. The outcomes of data analysis also provide very good information on the impact of instruction on student progress. The school provides excellent professional development opportunities, within and outside the school, for teachers to improve their skills and knowledge. As well as

the focus on training teachers in the effective use of data, the school has invested heavily in helping teachers to develop their skills in supporting English language learners. The teachers receive valuable subject and academy time to discuss progress, share ideas and plan curriculum and instruction. They have many opportunities for inter-visitations, which often have a specific focus for improving their own practice. New teachers receive excellent support from a coach and a master teacher. They meet regularly with their mentor and make classroom visits to observe good practice.

Students' personal development is well provided for in an advisory program, which explores a wide range of social issues. This is enhanced by the effective health program, which deals with health, family and other related issues. The guidance counselors work closely with all other related agencies to provide good support for the students and their families. The academic intervention team works very well to provide focused support for students identified as being at risk. Useful programs are devised to support their academic and social well being. The school has very clear and well-understood procedures in place, which lead to very high levels of good behavior and engagement. This is further supported through a range of partnerships the school has developed to enhance students' academic and social advancement. They include after-school and weekend academic support, an astrology science program, a project for building model airplanes and rockets and other activities of interest to students. There are also many other valuable opportunities for students to be involved in charitable work and providing assistance in community projects.

**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.**

The school's strategic planning contains clearly defined activities for effectively achieving its major developments for improving instructional practice and student achievement. The plans have appropriate timeframes and progress monitoring takes place regularly. However, strategic plans do not define interim goals to monitor effectively the progress the school is making in reaching its long-term goals for improving student achievement. There are very clear and effective processes in place for improving teacher outcomes. Regular reviews of data are followed by valuable conferences with teachers when the class average in achievement is below that for the subject. Actions are agreed and progress is monitored to ensure they are having a positive impact on student outcomes. Teachers make excellent use of data to measure the impact of their curriculum and instructional plans. They work successfully in teams to analyze data for individual, groups and sub-groups of students. They immediately and collaboratively review their curriculum and instruction and make necessary changes in line with the outcomes of the data analysis. School leaders make effective strategic changes in line with the information collected from data analysis. For example, an extra newcomers' class is now in place to more effectively accelerate the progress of students who are non-English speakers. The very strong leadership team works collaboratively with teachers to review all aspects of the work of the school and develop curriculum plans and pacing guides for each academic year. The school has developed a powerful teamwork approach to improving student outcomes and has the capacity to continue to grow in the future.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Walter H. Crowley Intermediate 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 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.**

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	
<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>					X

<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>					X

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