



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Intermediate School 77

Middle School 077

**976 Seneca Avenue
Queens
NY 11385**

Principal: Joseph A. Miller

Dates of review: March 24 – 26, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Ted Solow

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Intermediate School 77 is a middle school with 1182 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 5% Black, 71% Hispanic, 15% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92.2%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 66% eligibility.

A unique aspect of the school is the self-contained classes for developmentally delayed youth. These students are classified as having alternate assessment status for all State examinations.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides excellent leadership and fosters an atmosphere of collegiality and collaboration among teachers enabling mutual assistance.
- Well -defined intervention practices are in place to assist struggling students.
- Data is effectively collected, completely disaggregated and analyzed to better understand student performance.
- Professional development activities, driven by staff and student needs, meet the experience levels of the staff.
- Students are actively engaged and challenged through rigorous, engaging learning experiences.
- Academy teams work collaboratively to provide high quality teaching and learning conditions.
- Effective management systems assist the staff in targeting school goals and academic needs.
- The halls and classrooms are richly decorated with high quality student work demonstrating the high expectations of the school.
- Students are well known across the school, thereby encouraging high levels of mutual trust and respect in an orderly learning environment.
- Outside partnerships provide strong support for the arts and an after-school academic enrichment and recreation program.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand conferring practices to support student learning in social studies and science.
- Translate the student/parent handbook into Spanish in order to share information and goals consistently with all members of the school community.
- Build upon current strategies to improve parental involvement in the school life of their children.

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.

The dynamic, energetic principal and his instructional leadership team guide a collegial and collaborative family of educators and learners. The large building and classrooms are alive with high-quality student work, photo galleries and other materials that clearly focus on high expectations. The academically rigorous honors program prepares students for taking Advanced Regents classes when they enter high school. The staff are very adept at gathering and using data to inform instructional practices and establishing goals for high levels of student achievement. An assistant principal, guidance counselor and a dean lead each of the four academic academies at the school. Academy teams work collaboratively in analyzing data, developing instructional strategies, planning activities and providing optimal teaching and learning conditions. Teacher-student conferring practices are not uniformly in place in science and social studies to inform students and teachers of their current skills and what they need to do to improve their work. Coaches and other support personnel effectively assist the academic teams in their efforts, resulting in good continued growth and progress over the past four years. A well-designed arts program, with strong support from outside partnerships, successfully supports the rich academic program.

Professional development provides differentiated activities that focus on the needs and experience levels of the staff. Extensive training and support in using the Acuity computer program is a focal point of the school's efforts to enable teachers to use performance data to analyze student strengths and weaknesses and to create differentiated learning activities for their classes.

The school has addressed the areas for improvement from last year's Quality Review well. Setting school goals and plans are now more inclusive and all staff members are encouraged to participate in activities to design the future direction of the school. Instruction in English as a second language and special education classes is now in congruence with the core curriculum subjects. Additional resources support these efforts. All staff members participate in academy and departmental meetings to plan instructional activities for all grades and subjects.

The inquiry team is studying 21 grade 8, level 2 students whose math performance was slipping. Through the action research intervention planned by the team, 80% of the students have already made significant progress.

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.

The academy teams effectively gather, disaggregate and analyze data from the school's own extensive database and the Acuity program, as well as from a variety of formative and summative sources to gain an understanding of how students perform, progress and attain achievement levels. Teachers across the school are very adept at using data to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, develop differentiated classroom strategies and quickly identify struggling students. There are very effective procedures in place to monitor the performance, progress and achievement levels of students in special education classes, English language learners, collaborative team teaching students, high achieving students, holdovers and gender and ethnic groups. The school has well formed practices in place to meet the needs of each subgroup of interest. Each academy encourages the students' knowledge of their performance levels and development of their own achievement goals, as well as defining areas in need of improvement and determining with their teacher the steps they need to take to move forward. Students and teachers are using computer-based Department of Education protocols to address these areas in a highly effective manner.

The administrative team regularly reviews its own past performance and compares its performance with similar district schools. The school raised attendance levels and made steady growth on State examinations in all tested subjects and Regents results over the past four years. Overall progress, as measured by State exam outcomes, is meeting expectations and surpassing about half of other similar schools.

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.

There are effective procedures in place to develop whole-school, academy, department, grade and class goals. The high level of collaboration among staff and administrators leads to the creation of rigorous and challenging goals, which then become part of the Comprehensive Education Plan. Administrators reviewed the Learning Environment Survey and used the data in it to formulate additional goals for the next school year. Parents, teachers and students together identified the need for a school-wide honors program, which is in place this year.

Academy teams meet weekly to assess grade, class and individual performance and progress towards meeting educational goals. Teachers identify struggling students by reviewing performance data from the previous year, and constant updating and revising of the most current performance indicators. Academic intervention specialists provide assistance before, during and after school when these students' grade level targets are not being met. Service providers confer with classroom teachers to align instruction and monitor student progress towards meeting achievement goals. Parents are an integral

part of the process in developing an academic improvement plan for their children. Staff pay careful attention to higher-level students by encouraging higher expectations and providing rigorous, differentiated learning activities in their classes. The principal shares whole-school and interim progress goals with all members of the school community through effective communication practices. The parent/student handbook that clearly explains the high expectations of the school, school rules, attendance rules and other important information, is not translated into Spanish, however. Parental participation, especially for this group, is not yet at the desired level necessary to keep parents well informed about the school's program and goals.

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.

Instruction in core curriculum subjects follows City mandates, aligned with State standards, in order to deliver rigorous challenging instruction. The America's Choice literacy program enhances the English language arts program by providing effective reading and writing strategies. All classes use the workshop model of instruction to use flexible groupings and provide differentiated classroom activities. Teachers are adept at analyzing and using student performance data to insure that their students meet or exceed previous performance levels. The school does not have a uniform policy for of student-teacher conferring practices in social studies and science. This means that knowledge about students' strengths and weaknesses, by students and their teachers, and the support they receive are inconsistent.

The administrative team, coaches and lead teachers visit classes daily to support instruction and provide assistance. The principal holds teachers accountable through evidence of student progress, classroom engagement levels and use of data to improve learning outcomes. Student performance on formative and summative assessments is an embedded component of accountability that measures the levels and quality of instruction. The school effectively challenges students to reach their highest potential. Students are highly motivated, articulate, task-oriented and actively engaged in differentiated activities to accommodate varying learning styles. Courses in physical education, an array of arts classes and technology are part of the instructional program that enhances learning and provides facets to a well-rounded middle school education. Several students commented, "Learning is fun at our school." Students are active participants in their learning, meet with the instructional leadership team, and provide feedback on key topics in the school community. This highly effective feedback process from the students, as consumers, is being extended to all classes across the school. Excellent attendance and monitoring procedures are in place.

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.

The effective professional development program, designed around student needs, is differentiated to meet the needs and experience levels of the teachers. All professional development activities, well supported by the budget, enable the teachers to gain knowledge in differentiated instructional techniques and use of the Acuity computer program to improve student growth and progress. These enhanced skills have improved student outcomes in English language arts and math. The principal supports intervisitations among teachers to give them opportunities to observe best practices and strategies and incorporate them into their classrooms in order to improve learning. Teachers value their professional development and attend many City, State and national conferences. Teachers share new ideas and concepts with their colleagues at academy and departmental meetings. New staff members receive good mentoring services, which include conferences and class visits from an experienced teacher. The school uses the support structures offered by the Lead Instructional Mentor to provide additional training for new teachers.

Good mechanisms are in place to support student growth and development. Each academy offers guidance services, drug and alcohol prevention classes and effective assistance with the high school application and selection process. In the previous year, these efforts resulted in 15 students accepted to specialized New York City high schools. High levels of mutual trust and respect are in place in the school's well-managed safe, secure and orderly learning environment that is very conducive to an effective and broad educational program.

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 Comprehensive Educational Plan outlines targets, benchmarks and timeframes for all subject areas and achievement levels of the students. Good procedures are in place for monitoring whole-school, academy and departmental goals and objectives. The review of data is an integrated part of determining the level of progress attained at the school. The inquiry team and the instructional leadership team regularly review all student progress data to determine the effectiveness of the instructional program and the next steps for improving achievement. Academy and departmental teams analyze performance data and identify areas of strength and weaknesses in classes and grades as a guide for enhancing classroom instructional practices. Analysis of student, class, grade and departmental data takes place at strategic planning sessions that determine plans and goals for the following year. Students in English language arts and math establish attainment goals with their teachers to develop interim goals and articulate the steps they need for achieving success. Teachers use data well to analyze skill areas in the content areas to determine student strengths and deficits and make good adjustments to their instructional practices.

The principal and the school community share a clear vision for the future direction of the school. The vision includes greater use of the Acuity program, the involvement of parents, aligning the after-school program under the aegis of the school in support of the day school program, through academic enrichment and recreational activities, and teaching students how to make healthy life choices.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| SCHOOL NAME: Intermediate School 77 | 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 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 | | |
| 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? | | | | 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? | | | | 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 |

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