



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Steinway School

Middle School 141

37-11 21 Avenue

Queens

NY 11105

Principal: Miranda Pavlou

Dates of review: June 2 - 3, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Althea Serrant

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Steinway School is a middle school with 1046 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 5% Black, 42% Hispanic, 30% White, and 22% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 63% eligibility.

The school is divided into three academies each under the guidance of an assistant principal. It is an awarded NASA Explorer School through which links are made to include internships with scientists, competitions and fieldtrips to NASA centers.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and cabinet members demonstrate high quality leadership and management and are creating the vision for continuous school improvement.
- The school community works effectively in a collaborative way to plan the school's curriculum and instruction.
- New staff members receive a high level of valuable help and guidance to support their professional development.
- Effective partnerships provide useful academic, social and cultural enrichment for the students.
- The school is a calm and respectful environment where students feel safe and attend regularly.
- Parents have high praise for the support and care their children receive from the staff of the school.
- The school enhances the curriculum with the arts and other enrichment programs which broadens the interest of students.
- Teachers use a variety of technology tools to focus on the students' interest and learning styles.
- The aspect of vocabulary building studied by the inquiry team members is enthusiastically implemented school wide in all content area subjects.
- The school has very good systems in place to support and improve the learning progress of the students in greatest need.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve strategic planning to include interim goals in order to measure the school's progress in meeting and revising its long-term goals.
- Improve the tracking of students of different ethnicity and gender groups to ascertain trends and inform of any adjustment required to programs.
- Ensure that all students are aware of the goals set for their achievement and of what they need to do to improve.

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 Steinway School has focused on and addressed all the issues identified in the previous Quality Review. There have been improvements made to the assessment systems including establishing a benchmark for all students at the beginning of the school year, so the school is now able to monitor their annual progress effectively. The intervention program for special education students has been sharpened and has resulted in improved scores. The school currently varies and differentiates its professional development to improve the knowledge and skills of the teachers.

The administration makes effective use of data to monitor progress at individual and subject area planning meetings. Opportunities to take the algebra Regents offer a challenge to the higher performing students. Clubs and various after school activities create cohesiveness among the three academies. The school runs smoothly and the discipline is very good. Good attendance is praised and absence is closely monitored. Teachers work cooperatively to ensure they supervise the students closely both inside and outside of school. The administration share high expectations and the students express their desire to attend college to become engineers or doctors and other professionals that require a college degree.

The inquiry team is focusing on the specific learning habits of level 2 students as well as analyzing the different aspects of learning displayed by girls and boys.

The school environment is alive with students' work celebrating their successes and recognizing their involvement in various community projects. The school integrates the arts in all the content areas. Plays and other performances are one of the hallmarks of the school. There is at present, inconsistency in setting measurable interim goals to monitor progress made in reaching long-term goals regularly. Analysis of data to track the progress of students of different ethnicity and gender groups is accomplished less well.

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.

Teachers administer a baseline assessment to all the students at the beginning of the school year. This provides them with a precise picture of student performance and acts as a benchmark to monitor progress during the year. Every week teachers meet to analyze students' progress. Data is collected from any interim assessments and from various

informal assessments. This provides a broad range of data available to be used as a guide in planning for differentiated instruction as well as to establish each student's strengths and areas for improvement in specific skills.

The school monitors the progress of the special education students and English language learners closely. Teachers use this information gleaned from the data very effectively to ensure systems are in place to support these students. Based on close monitoring, teachers mainstream these students into the general education classes when they show the capability of coping with such an arrangement. The school surveyed all students to assess their personal interest and learning styles. Once the data was collected staff members developed a rubric for praising the students who excel through overcoming their areas of weakness. The school has looked into the different learning habits of students according to their gender and actively strengthens the skill levels of the lowest achieving boys resulting in some good progress. The analysis of data to track the progress of students of different ethnicity and gender groups is less accomplished. This reduces the ability of the school to look at trends that might indicate more or less successful progress and requiring adjustments to plans.

Based on data analysis of the student interest survey and test data, the school has developed intervention programs and established clubs. These positive initiatives have resulted in an increase in the student attendance in the 37.5 minutes program. Comparisons with other schools resulting from visits by the principal and senior staff has helped to inform effective strategies to increase the after school students' attendance.

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.

School leaders, lead teachers and coaches collaborate to review student data on a regular basis. Their role is to ensure that the student goals are reviewed and addressed each quarter. From the baseline assessment administered in September it identifies the initial goals the students are to begin working on immediately. Subsequent quarterly goals based on the various interim assessments are established. This system is effective in addressing the needs of the students as they prepare for the various high-stakes exams and high school expectations. The staff has developed curriculum maps that guide staff to outline the goals that students are to meet each month and over the full year. Staff aligns these curriculum maps in each content area with the Acuity data and the State standards requirements. The school reinforces the importance of achieving the expected targets by posting the names of the students making honors on a bulletin board and in the parent bulletin.

The school has well-developed systems for supporting students in greatest need of improvement and as a result, most make good gains in achievement. Academic intervention teachers, technology programs, and consultants provide good support for students. The academic intervention teachers pull the students from their classes and by using individual data profiles provide any intervention strategies required. During the 37.5 minutes period, struggling students are provided with targeted differentiated assistance using various technology programs and one to one personal assistance from the teachers. Targeting the needs of the high achieving students has resulted in the formation of an accelerated algebra class and other enrichment programs to help ensure that the students do not decline in progress.

Parents are very happy with the high expectation the staff has for their students. They state that no matter what level the students are on, the teachers demand more work from them. Parents feel welcomed in the school and the staff offers good support including providing parent workshops in curriculum areas such as English as a second language and math strategies, technology and how to help their child succeed in school. All parents receive student report cards and monthly newsletters. In addition, the parents of struggling students receive written progress cards more regularly than others. Progress reports do not yet contain information on the student's next learning steps, making it more difficult for parents to support their children academically at home. However, parents stated that the home regular verbal and email communication from the school helped them keep abreast of their children's progress. The parents would like to offer written feedback on the progress reports.

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.

There is a high quality, broad, school curriculum focused on linking programs and class lessons to the real world. Content area teachers plan thematically using student data, curriculum maps, and the State curriculum from which to plan. The Impact Math program is part of the core curriculum. Higher performing students attend an integrated algebra class in preparation for the New York State math Regents. Many of the students participate in District and Citywide competitions that have added to their confidence. Americas Choice is the balanced instructional model that forms the framework for the English language arts curriculum and to deliver a differentiated approach to teaching and learning. The student's own academic progress profile sheets show that the implementation of the core curriculum through a balanced instructional program, fosters an individualized approach to teaching.

The arts are celebrated around the building and are integrated in all the content area subjects. Students take pride in their work and they proudly discuss the various quilts on display that depicts their culture on social values. The students in the three academies enjoy performing together each month that serves to create a sense of unity throughout the school.

The services of an English language arts consultant, a lead special education teacher and a special school coordinator, provide extra support for all students. The lead teachers meet regularly, review data and visit classes to provide a push in or a pull out model of support to the students. Each academy has an assistant principal, a dean and a guidance counselor who provide support to maintain a safe and orderly environment. Students enjoy coming to school and they remark that by having the staff walk outside at dismissal, behavior and safety has improved. Parents and students appreciate the care demonstrated by the staff.

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 principal, the assistant principals, lead teachers, and coaches participate in regular classroom observations. As a result, team members assist teachers on next steps to improve their instructional practices. Walkthroughs conducted regularly are based on a theme such as environment or expectations. Best practices observed are highlighted in the staff newsletter. Scheduled formal and informal classroom intervisitations take place to help strengthen teachers' instructional practices. The staff indicated that viewing the practice in another teacher's room with an assistant principal or a coach is productive. New teachers attend a weekly professional development training conducted by the principal. One such meeting focused on discipline. The improvement in classroom behavior was noted. The staff indicated that by having all teachers, guidance counselors, deans and administrators consistently reinforcing the discipline code, the school has created a safe environment.

The newly hired events coordinator provides support to all the academies in an effective, cohesive manner. The students indicated that they enjoy the combined assemblies with all three academies. The school's partners provide enrichment and tutorial activities. The school fosters students' participation in current world issues such as the China Relief fund and the Greening of America program to save the environment and celebrates these programs by posting artifacts of their involvement on the walls.

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 and cabinet members work closely together to provide leadership that guides the school to explore continuous school improvement. The school key goals are to improve the English language arts and math scores and build the self-esteem of the English language learners and similarly those of special education students. Goals are set but these are open-ended and lack a specific time period in which to meet targets. Other goals are skill specific and again do not have a time frame in which students are to achieve the desired outcome.

With the principal, staff discusses data and plans in order to develop strategies to improve skills of all students. Agreeing to purchase technology programs for differentiation and intervention activities resulted in students saying that the technology programs helped them to improve. The teachers use various diagnostic and interim assessments to adjust plans and provide intervention for struggling students.

The inquiry team focused on and reviewed the target group of students' standardized test results, class work, and various assessments to conclude that the common thread that needed to be addressed was vocabulary. The team invited members of the faculty who studied the data, reviewed literature on building vocabulary, visited other schools and shared their results with the school as a whole. The collaboration resulted in the school adoption of vocabulary building for all students in all content areas.

The principal has a strong vision for students to attend college and pursue careers that require science or math focus. The structures to reach school goals are being built.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Steinway School	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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