

# Quality Review Report 2008-2009

**The Glendale Intermediate School**

**Middle School 119**

**74-01 78 Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11385**

**Principal: Dr. Jeanne Fagan**

**Dates of review: March 3–4, 2009  
Lead Reviewer: Catherine M. Powis**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Glendale Intermediate School is a middle school with 1151 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 2% Black, 37% Hispanic, 51% White, and 10% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 92.2%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding. The principal is new to the school, having been appointed in September.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

Since she took her post in September the principal has been providing clear leadership and clarity of vision for school improvement, matched with high expectations for both faculty and students. The school has made good progress since the last Quality Review, giving special attention to those areas most in need of improvement. Teachers in all core subjects have been working together well to collect and analyze a wide range of data, maintained in assessment binders, that allows them to address the learning needs of each student. Students self-assess at the beginning of each unit of study with the help of their teachers to determine their individual and time-bound learning goals. The school has however, yet to formalize systems to set interim goals and benchmarks throughout the year, in order to target effective instruction in all core subjects to meet individual, group, and grade level performance. Because of this, school leaders cannot precisely evaluate the impact of improved instruction on accelerating student progress or teacher progress in achieving their professional goals.

An analysis of summative data from State exams through the ARIS system and other tools resulted in targeting specific student populations who either have not reached proficiency or have dropped over the last year. Several inquiry teams have been launched this year so that teams of teachers, coaches, and administrators can plan focused and differentiated instructional strategies to support the learning needs of these students. Mini inquiry teams of teachers are working together to modify their methods of instruction not only for targeted, low performing students with diverse needs and learning styles, but also for high achievers who have “slipped in their performance”. The school is focusing on continued professional development that is not only matched to professional goals, but also supports the teachers in developing differentiated approaches to improve student outcomes and to promote even higher levels of engagement and challenge in all core subjects.

Parents play an important role in their children’s education and are both supportive and challenging to the school. They appreciate the broad and engaging curriculum that includes music, dance, theater, and robotics. They are very pleased with the increased communication with the home that is taking place this year. School leaders and faculty communicate with parents the expectations of the coursework, their child’s goals in each unit of study, interim progress, and attendance in English language arts, math, science and social studies. As one parent commented, “Now the school is really an extension of my home”.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has established strong staff relationships and collaborative opportunities for teachers to discuss student progress and improve instruction.
- Teachers are beginning to analyze a wide range of data effectively, to set student goals and assess progress in all subjects.
- The work of the inquiry teams is successful in encouraging teachers to become reflective in their data-driven practices and to address very specific student needs to accelerate progress.
- The strong partnership with the home enables leaders and teachers to communicate high expectations and to provide many opportunities for parents to help their children achieve their learning goals.
- Professional development supports teachers in understanding how to use data to drive goal setting.
- A broad and engaging curriculum that includes co-curricular courses in the performing arts motivates students to learn.

### What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that individual learning goals and instruction are differentiated to match closely to student needs and interests in all core subjects.
- Regularly and systematically, track and monitor the results of individual students, classes, and grades to identify trends, progress and achievement in all core subjects and the extended day.
- Improve professional development so that it further meets the specific needs of individual teachers and provides a data driven instruction and curriculum.
- Extend goal setting for individual students to measurable interim and long-term learning goals for each core subject on each grade, from grade to grade, and school-wide through a thorough analysis of subject specific performance and progress data.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school gathers and analyzes a wide range of external and internal data carefully to conduct a needs assessment in literacy and numeracy and to develop the Comprehensive Education Plan. In addition, a close scrutiny of exam item skills and trends in performance and progress identifies the key areas of instructional need for grades, classes, individuals and groups of students. This led the school to identify and set programs for special education students, English language learners, and grade 8 students, who required the most support. English language arts exam results are shared with teachers in all core subjects and are often used to understand comprehension levels and set appropriate work. Unit tests in the core subjects provide additional insight into progress throughout the year. However, regular, systematic tracking of the results to identifying trends, progress and achievement of individual students, classes, and grades in content and skill in social studies and science have not yet been established. Ongoing data in the classroom is maintained for each student in teacher assessment binders, online programs, student work folders, portfolios and sourcebooks. This guides teachers to decide on next steps in learning throughout the year in each core subject. Several school inquiry teams developed this year have helped many teachers and school leaders to understand and use data to discuss and track student progress. However, a more precise school-wide system has not been established to ensure that all teachers and assistant principals are consistently tracking and monitoring data with a broad lens to effectively inform curriculum and instructional decisions. The school uses a variety of successful methods to exchange information about learning needs and outcomes with students and their families. These include email communication, progress reports, report cards, Acuity assessment results, newsletters, and individual student goal sheets in all core subjects. Parents access Acuity and Castle Learning online programs to work with their children at home. As a result, parents appreciate the information and comment on how accessible the principal, assistant principals, and faculty are for discussions about their children's progress. This year a "School Messenger" phone call system has been very successful in informing parents of matters regarding lateness, absence, information on events and upcoming testing. As a result, the attendance rate is 93.7%, an increase from 92.2% last year.

**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 principal has worked hard to improve planning and goal setting since this was an area in need of improvement on the last Quality Review. Appropriate school-wide goals are identified in the Comprehensive Educational Plan from a collaborative and thorough needs assessment using a wide range of data. The principal’s annual goals and objectives for school improvement are aligned to this plan. Teachers are supported in learning how to use data wisely to determine student learning goals in the core subjects. The progression of setting learning goals is assisted by a series of school-wide periodic assessments in math, English language arts and unit tests in social studies and science. Progress towards goals is assessed through discussions with students, reviews of their work, and conferencing, while cultivating self and peer assessment. All these processes help to clarify high expectations and the necessary steps for student achievement for both parents and students. However, some learning goals are generic and at times non-academic, or too broadly based on performance indicators. Consequently, they are not all challenging, measurable and targeted, with a clear and defined focus on the progress of each student according to his or her specific learning data profile. Likewise, in English language arts and math, students are challenged to make good progress in state exams but there is a lack of clarity in the process for social studies and science. Extended-day tutorial instruction provides an array of valuable support in intervention and enrichment programs. More frequent collaboration and alignment of extended day support with classroom teaching and learning goals in the core subjects is now evident.

Nearly all the school’s students are higher-achievers and expect challenging instruction. They understand and collaborate in the goal-setting process giving articulate reasons for their targets. Most teachers set student goals in the core subjects arising from their own data collection. However, some rely too much on English language arts data provided by leaders rather than generating their own specific data as a starting point to set targets.

Parents welcome having email addresses to communicate with the faculty when they have concerns or want to request further information. Nevertheless, some parents are not very clear about the expectations of the goal sheets that they review every month, nor do they fully understand the value of next-steps learning in helping their child progress academically. This lack of clarity around goal setting sometimes leaves parents not knowing how to assist their children in meeting their goals.

**Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The school is divided into three smaller, more personalized learning academies, Humanities, Performing Arts, and the Sciences, that are enriched by a broad and engaging curriculum. The Performing Arts academy is particularly effective as there are

multiple opportunities for co-curricular studies and it has been expanded to include more students, at parents' request. Students choose from band, dance, chorus, and drama, and undergo a screening assessment to determine interests and abilities for their coursework. Bi-annual shows and performances enrich the students' experiences. Four district-based gifted and talented classes provide further challenge through accelerated coursework in foreign languages, alongside Regents classes in earth science, integrated algebra, and robotics. In each academy, students express ways that they are supported by staff leading to a mutual respect and trust.

The principal has established strong staff relationships and collaborative opportunities for teachers to discuss student progress and improve instruction. As a result, teachers voluntarily meet each week to align instruction to desired learning results and expected performances in each content area. Performance indicators and matched skills are established for each unit of study. Effective use of assessment leads to purposeful grouping of students and an appropriate degree of challenge that is matched to these performance indicators and skill levels. However, individual learning goals are not always matched specifically enough to improve student outcomes. Equally, instruction is not always modified and adjusted to meet each student's readiness, interest, and learning profile. In self-contained special education classes, learning styles are taken into account when planning instruction so that learning activities are differentiated carefully, enabling these students to make good progress.

A review of curriculum was conducted after a data analysis revealing a slip in performance of high-achieving students in the 2008 State English language arts exam. This led to selected teachers engaging in professional development to take the lead in revising the English language arts curriculum. The goal is to create a higher quality curriculum that strives toward a thorough understanding of text structures and concepts through the use of inquiry. Two lead teachers and the literacy coach have established two classroom lab sites to pilot the new curriculum. The principal, who also attends the professional development workshops, has redirected budgetary resources to support this endeavor with the necessary new texts and materials. This new curriculum will be rolled out to the whole school during a designated half day of professional development in March.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The work and example of the inquiry team of teachers, coaches and administrators have effectively encouraged further teacher participation in action research that is improving student outcomes. As a result, ten mini inquiry teams of teachers work collaboratively to examine conditions of learning, student work and outcomes. This determines the next steps to improve instruction and student progress. Groups identified targeted students to represent a cross-section of the students identified in the needs assessment of the Comprehensive Education Plan. As team members reflected on their practice one teacher offered, "I never stopped to look at the data before and rethink how a student learns. Five years from now, I hope everyone reflects on their practice and plans for learning outcomes."

Professional development is determined by classroom observations, staff and student surveys, research based discussions, and student outcomes. There is a strong focus on improving differentiation as a strategy to meet the needs of each student and to ensure that all students make the progress expected. The principal strategically schedules a variety of venues for professional development. These include faculty conferences, department meetings, and half day workshops that focus on the school wide priorities for improvement. Teachers are very collaborative and have many opportunities to work together and share good practice. Voluntary “Lunch and Learns” are regularly attended by several staff members. While different topics are discussed, most time is spent on how to use data to inform instruction. A literacy coach and math coach support teachers and are part of the school-wide inquiry work. New teachers are supported by assistant principals who work with them on the school’s “observation focus points” as well as their own professional goals. An explicit, differentiated strategy for individual teachers to enable them to improve instruction is not yet fully established.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 has a clear vision for school improvement and shares it regularly with all members of the school community. Her high expectations for all students drive the goal-setting that is a major focus this year. It is apparent that teachers are eager to participate in achieving the shared vision of strong academic teaching and building self-esteem and confidence in students for success in high school and beyond.

Interim assessment tools, such as Acuity, Castle Learning, and teacher-created assessments, are used by teachers to monitor student progress in their classrooms throughout the year. Students are supported by extended-day tutorials, and early bird academic programs. However, leaders have not yet established a broader process for the rigorous formal monitoring of student progress that includes interim checkpoints and benchmark measures in each core subject, in and across the grades. For the most part benchmarks of periodic review of core data involve an appraisal of report card grades of the four marking periods. The principal recognizes that these grades may not always provide a reliable and valid measure of progress. Likewise, students are not able to articulate long term learning goals for all subjects with equal facility as they might in English language arts and math. This is a result of an inconsistency in establishing and mapping long term goals and interim targets in social studies and in science.

Teachers set their own professional goals. However, purposeful goal setting and more comprehensive opportunities for support are not yet an embedded practice. This means that the impact of professional development on accelerating student progress cannot be precisely evaluated. For example, the best practices of some teachers cannot be shared frequently enough as opportunities for teachers to visit each other’s classrooms are limited due to restrictive scheduling. In addition, evidence of achievement of individual teacher goals are too generic and are not grounded enough in student outcomes.

# School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: Glendale Intermediate School</b>	△	➤	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?		<b>X</b>		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?		<b>X</b>		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

## DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYQ, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.</b>							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?			X				
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?		X					
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?		X					
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?			X				
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?			X				
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?			X				
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?		X					
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X				
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>