

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Midwood High School

High School 405

**2839 Bedford Avenue.
Brooklyn
NY 11210**

Principal: David Cohen

**Dates of review: May 3-5, 2010
Lead Reviewer: Kenneth Forman**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Midwood is a high school with 4038 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 38% Black, 11% Hispanic, 20% White, and 30% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 93.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Midwood High School is a high performing school with a welcoming, safe, caring and inclusive culture. As a result, students benefit from the rigorous, challenging, and well-balanced education offered, which includes a host of advanced placement classes, a variety of science, humanities and arts courses, as well as a large number of extracurricular activities and interscholastic sports teams. Students are enthusiastic about learning and are motivated to achieve in a culture that facilitates student engagement. Although the school is large, teachers know their students well. Teachers make time to assist their students' learning before, during, and/or after school. Additionally, there are a number of structures available throughout the day to support students, including an outstanding peer tutoring laboratory and a vibrant school library. Although instruction is conducted at high levels, differentiation is not yet a systemic practice throughout the school. Some teachers inconsistently set and analyze interim goals and benchmarks for student subgroups for which they are responsible and share progress towards attaining those goals with students and their families.

The dynamic and highly visible principal is the force that drives the school to higher levels of excellence. The principal has created a cohesive learning community that uses a wide range of formative and summative assessment data to plan and revise instruction. By conducting professional development for assistant principals and staff, the principal models the delivery of instruction, how to embrace change, and how teachers can enrich the educational practice. The school has extensive relationships with a variety of community-based organizations, especially Brooklyn College, its next-door neighbor, which provides the high school with tutoring services, student observers, and student teachers. A variety of other community-based organizations collaborate with the school to provide programming that supports student academic, social emotional and health needs. Parents have commented: "Bigger is better; the offerings at the school are amazing; the school has figured out how to personalize my child's education."

The school collects and uses a wide variety of data for individual students and subgroups. Analysis of data provides information for teachers to determine next steps with their students. There are many inquiry teams working to examine data and provide solutions to school-wide problems. However, some additional teachers need to take on more extensive leadership roles so that their input becomes institutionalized throughout the school and a regular practice for all teachers.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school leaders and teaching staff use a variety of formative and summative data to develop a clear picture of student performance and needs.
 - Formative assessments from ACUITY, HSST/ARIS, teacher-developed assessments, commercially scanned assessments, writing assignments, and scholarship marks provide information about student performance. Summative data from Regents, advanced placement exams, term analysis reports, and credit accumulation reports also provide a clear picture of student trends and needs. As a result, the school makes programmatic changes that optimize student learning opportunities, including changing the length of the school day, the number of instructional periods per day, and when and how much credit accumulation is needed.
 - Data provides school leaders with information about performance of subgroups, including African American males, Hispanic students, and special education students so that leaders share identified trends to inform instructional practice and to maximize achievement for all subgroups.
- The school leaders align resources with the school's instructional goals to best meet students' needs.
 - The school leaders work collaboratively to maximize resources based upon identified needs each summer so that the start of each school year provides the best possible opportunities for success for teachers and students. For example, as part of the principal's careful resource management, the school installed 63 Smartboards and provided additional funding for materials for each department.
 - Funding provides support for specific initiatives developed as a result of annual goal planning. School leadership provides support for a peer-tutoring laboratory, closing the achievement gap for African American males in 9th grade, increasing credit accumulation of the school's 3rd year cohort, and implementing a change from the Collegiate Institute to the Liberal Arts and Sciences Institute. Data indicated that students were requesting more opportunities for tutoring before, during and after the school day, so leadership provided funding to initiate a peer-tutoring laboratory to offer students academic supports as needed.
- The school leaders and staff work cohesively to review and analyze the quality of curricular, instructional, and organizational decisions to refine practice and programs that meet students' needs.
 - School leaders have created a term analysis report that provides student subgroup achievement data by institute for each semester. Evaluation of this data has provided insight into necessary program modifications to meet student needs so that subgroups within each are maximizing their achievement. School leadership works with teachers to modify course offerings and change the focus of these offerings to reflect the needs of identified subgroups and make the targeted course more interdisciplinary.

- School leaders use a variety of data including scholarship reports from HSST, term analysis reports, and credit accumulation reports to examine the achievement gap for 9th grade African American males, the credit accumulation of their 3rd year cohort, and monitor achievement of students in their Collegiate Institute so that necessary program modifications can take place to assure success of these subgroups. Assistant principals and teachers have modified English language arts courses and realigned delivery of instruction for the 9th grade cohort to be more reflective of student strengths and needs.
- School leaders use a variety of professional learning opportunities including coaching, learning walks, inter-visitations and outside consultants that improve student-learning outcomes.
 - The school uses formative teacher data and the analysis of student performance to drive professional learning opportunities for staff. In addition to regular supervision of instruction, assistant principals have been trained by the principal to look at practice and coach teachers in planning, engagement, and providing students with rigorous instruction so that teaching reflects the needs of subgroups.
 - Assistant principals provide teachers with time for learning walks and inter-visitations and debrief with teachers to improve practice and maximize student-learning opportunities.
- School leaders, teachers, and students exhibit a warm and respectful relationship, resulting in an environment that is conducive to learning and supportive of student growth.
 - Although the school is large, it provides a family-like atmosphere that motivates the students to excel. The school has a number of programs that support its positive culture, including SING, theater productions, social emotional learning for a majority of 9th grade students, and a large number of athletic teams.
 - The positive culture of the school, responsible for the high attendance rate, is characterized by a high degree of engagement. The principal, administrative staff and teachers exhibit a real concern for the academic and social well being of students and ensure they have a safe place to learn.
- School leaders provide a variety of structured professional development activities individualized to meet teachers' needs to maximize student learning.
 - The principal has transformed faculty meetings into professional learning opportunities that provide for both small group, departmental, and grade-wide environments for learning, and include such topics as data driven instruction, student engagement, use of technology, and differentiation.
 - The Leadership Academy is providing the principal with opportunities for a peer group of principals to engage in peer coaching. Principals inter-visit with their colleagues to look at best practices and learn what works to benefit students and their teachers.

- School leaders maintain a number of partnerships with community-based organizations to support students' and their families' academic, social-emotional, and health needs to promote the students' academic and social success.
 - Numerous partnerships successfully address the educational, social and emotional needs of students provide health services, tutoring, and community service opportunities for students. SUNY Downstate provides a health symposium and teen health fair to reinforce good health habits. The partners also work with support staff to build capacity for staff to identify and address these issues within the school.
 - Brooklyn College provides tutors, student observers, and student teachers while members of the Midwood staff teach at the college.

What the school needs to improve

- Promote greater consistency in differentiating instruction so that teaching more accurately reflects purposeful groupings, tasks accommodate different learning styles, and students are appropriately challenged.
 - Although the school utilizes data to identify subgroups based on performance, a number of teachers have not yet embedded differentiation as a regular practice. As a result, these students often are not sufficiently challenged to address their individual learning needs.
 - Although most students are actively engaged in instruction, some lessons do not reflect multiple entry points or extend successful learning for all students.
- Sharpen practices around data-informed goal-setting in the classroom so that students and their families know their next learning steps.
 - Currently teachers set and analyze interim goals and benchmarks for student subgroups, but some teachers have not yet embedded this practice of sharing progress towards attaining those goals and next learning steps with students and their families.
 - Although the school is implementing a school-wide system to set data informed goals for groups of students, including those who need to be most challenged, it is not yet an embedded practice for all teachers so that teachers can develop additional supports for these students and modify classroom practice.
- Increase professional collaborations in the three school institutes to promote shared leadership growth among teachers, which will accelerate student learning.
 - Although teachers are engaged in a number of collaborative teams, these teachers have not yet taken on a school leadership role so that their inquiry team findings are not institutionalized among school faculty and therefore impede student progress.

School name: Midwood High School K405	△	▶	✓	+
Overall QR Score				X
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?				X
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				X
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?				X
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?				X
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?				X
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?				X			
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?				X			
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X			
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				X			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?				X			
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X			
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?				X			
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?				X			
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X			
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed