



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Meyer Levin School for the Performing Arts

Intermediate School K285

**5909 Beverly Road
Brooklyn
NY 11203**

Principal: Frederick A. Underwood

Dates of review: February 16 -17, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Yvette Donald

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Meyer Levin School for the Performing Arts is an intermediate school with 939 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 97% Black and 3%, Hispanic students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 92%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has clearly established systems for monitoring teacher practice with a clear focus on improving instructional outcomes.
 - The instructional team gathers and reviews formal and informal data on classroom instruction, including collaboratively done observations and teacher data reports. Based on these findings, differentiated professional development opportunities are provided and strongly encouraged and teacher performance evaluation and retention decisions are made. This assures that the individual needs of teachers are identified and met, providing professional learning experiences that are improving the quality of instruction school-wide.
- The principal utilizes data to make organizational decisions that promote improvements in student and adult learning.
 - In an effort to support the school's professional development and student performance goals, the principal has eliminated the official class period and capitalized on that instructional time to create four additional half-day professional development days for teacher learning. Additionally, teachers from each academy work together to place students in future classes based on student assessment data and teacher observations. Teacher assignments are a result of formal and informal teacher observations, teacher preference sheets and administrative discussions, allowing close adult/student relationships to grow. This enables the school to further develop its small learning communities, increase teacher accountability, and focus its attention on improving instruction and increasing student performance.
- Extensive student services ensure that the personal, social, physical and emotional needs of students and parents are met.
 - The school has a mental health clinic affiliation for at-risk students, especially males, and their families. In collaboration with the school, the clinic provides parents updates on their child's progress and supports for meeting social and emotional needs at home. This support addresses social and emotional challenges that often interfere with student learning. As a result, student attendance has increased, and there is a reduction in the number of in-school infractions.
 - Deans within each academy and teacher presence during the change of periods and throughout the day, along with guidance counselors dedicated to each academy helps to support the school's whole-child philosophy. This ensures that students' affective learning needs are addressed, and more time is spent in class. As a result, there is increased student work in student notebooks and work folders.
- Administrators use a systematic approach to the gathering, dissemination and application of data at the school level in order to examine patterns and trends in student performance.

- The principal's investment in SKEDULA and committed use of ARIS is shared by teachers and faculty. Administration and teams of teachers consistently use SKEDULA and ARIS as central locations to gather and store essential information on student academic and performance strengths and needs. This provides all members of the school community with access to critical information on student learning and allows for identification of overall trends related to student outcomes.
- The principal, faculty and staff work in concert to create a calm, respectful and orderly environment for learning to take place.
 - In response to the Learning Environment Survey data, the school has instituted numerous measures to address safety concerns: hall sweeps, buddy systems for handling disruptive behaviors, zero tolerance policy for infractions, and staggered arrival and dismissals. As a result, the number of in-classroom disruptions have decreased and more students arrive for classes on time. Some students report that there are fewer altercations during change of periods, and they feel more accountable for their timely arrival for instructional periods.
 - The school's youth development focus serves as the foundation for continued overall student improvement. Teachers and staff coordinate social and emotional experiences for students, such as student government, advisories, and targeted mental health supports. In addition, sports related initiatives serve to bring students into the school early in the day or on Saturdays. A student driven conflict resolution program functions as a support for the structured initiatives related to safety and respect. As a result, each child's challenges and successes are well known and addressed accordingly.

What the school needs to improve

- Further expand the analysis of student data to better align the curriculum across all content areas to identify key standards and concepts to accelerate learning.
 - Curriculum maps for English language arts, math science and social studies are aligned to State standards. They serve as roadmaps, directing instruction to ensure that lessons prepare students for New York State exams. Academic tasks related to the curriculum are intended to engage all students. However, there is limited evidence of purposeful alignment to key standards and instructional foci. Academic tasks are not based on deep data analysis and do not yet engage and challenge all students at various levels of performance. Therefore instruction is limited to overarching content, skills and strategies, minimizing higher levels of student engagement, challenge and progress.
- Refine data organization and analysis to ensure that all teachers know the strengths and needs of individual and sub-groups of students across all classrooms on an ongoing basis to support targeted instruction.
 - Teachers use student performance level and interim assessment data to plan for student learning that allows for small group instruction within classrooms. However, data analysis is limited in that it does not foster the identification of areas of need for specialized sub-groups of students such as males, and school self-identified school with disabilities across grade levels. As a result, individual and teams of teachers are unable to provide targeted instruction to individual and key groups of students within classrooms based on specific areas of academic need.

- Teachers gather and organize student performance information using hand held technology. This provides them with general classroom level data related to attendance, participation, homework completion, behavior and other components regarding conditions of learning. However, the practice of organizing and analyzing this information to make targeted instructional decisions based on individual students' levels of proficiency and progress is general and inconsistent. As a result, individual and groups of teachers seldom differentiate teaching strategies or instructional tasks to promote higher levels of student learning.
- Extend the practice of using student performance and progress trends in order to target and differentiate learning experiences across all classrooms for all student sub-groups.
 - The school wide philosophy on instruction is rooted in the belief that, student information must drive instruction. They rely on report card data, student behavioral data, and summative test results to make instructional decisions. Effort is made to group students based on the results of learning styles surveys, and current performance levels. However, teaching practices do not yet reflect targeted instruction based on these beliefs, as activities are inconsistently tiered based on performance levels. This provides little opportunity for students to engage in rigorous targeted activities to assure higher levels of thinking.
- Establish greater consistency in setting and articulating long- and short-term learning goals that are explicit with next steps that are shared with teachers, students and parents.
 - Some student work reflects teacher feedback and guided next steps. There is inconsistency in the school's grading practices. Some student work bears extensive feedback, while other more complex work does not; this prevents students from developing a clear understanding of where they are in their learning, and the next steps they need to take to move to the next level.
 - The administration has created long term goals directed at improving student progress and performance. Student data is used to inform the development of these goals. However, the evaluation of progress towards meeting these goals using periodic assessments is not yet a practice. Therefore, the school is unable to make mid course corrections to instructional and organizational plans in order to achieve these goals.
- Enrich professional learning opportunities and the supports for adult learning in order to improve student learning.
 - Teacher meetings, both within and across academies, often focus on student performance. Academic intervention support strategies such as early morning programs, Hour of Power, and Saturday School are an outgrowth of several of these meetings. The practice of analyzing student work is limited to a few teams that are beginning to infuse an inquiry approach in order to refine classroom level instruction. However, it is unclear whether staff are programmed or strongly encouraged to meet on a regular basis for these collaborations, or if there is an analysis of the impact of teaching practices in order to increase student learning outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Meyer Levin School for the Performing Arts	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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		

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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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				
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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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			
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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed