



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**Metropolitan Diploma Plus**

**23K647**

**985 Rockaway Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11212**

**Principal: Meri Yallowitz**

**Dates of review: May 3 - 4, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Elyse Doti**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Metropolitan Diploma Plus is a transfer high school with 220 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 81% Black, 18% Hispanic, 0% White, and .5% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 41% of the students enrolled and girls account for 59%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 63.6%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has made purposeful choices around the use of resources and teacher time to ensure that staff has time to meet and plan in order to better address the learning needs of students.
  - The school's investment in technology such as SMART boards and lap tops as well as a technician to support teachers in using these resources is aligned to school-wide and individual teachers' goals this year. Many teachers incorporated the use of the board in lessons and one English teacher is using the school's Google platform to provide feedback to students on their writing. As a result, students are exposed to the technology that they will be using in college and the workforce and are building the competencies to compete in a technology-driven world. The school has six scheduled half days throughout the year for faculty to do extended work to deepen their inquiry team practices. Teams of teachers who often teach a similar cohort of students meet to address the needs of their students. A team of Aussie consultants meet with teams regularly to further support this work. As a result of having extended time to meet, teacher teams understand and use inquiry as a tool to identify the needs of students and to then examine teaching practices resulting in timely revisions to teachers' work and improved student outcomes.
- School leaders have worked hard with community-based organizations to create a safe and nurturing environment where students' needs are known and supported, impacting their academic success.
  - The school is purposeful in its efforts to avoid labeling students with words such as English Language Learner or Special Education. Their open door policy and warm atmosphere allows students to feel welcomed and accepted, ready for a fresh start. The school carefully monitors attendance data and has been strategic around changes and expectations in classroom practices to further engage or reengage students. As a result, attendance has gone from a -7.5 decline last year to -1.5 this year.
  - The school uses the Primary Contact Person model, assigning an advocate counselor to serve as the first point of contact for each student. 91% of students polled on the school survey expressed that they are known well by adults in the building. Students meet regularly with their advocate counselor to review academic progress, goals, and action plans for the future. Students reported that their counselors help them stay focused on academics." As a result of this model, the school's six-year graduation rate is 55.6%, well above the other transfer schools.
- School leaders organize and provide differentiated supports for teachers in order to elevate school-wide instruction and promote professional growth and reflection.
  - School leaders developed a tiered, school-wide professional development plan with targeted audience, expected outcomes, and assessments to determine impact. Classroom observations and coaching logs document

progress. As a result teachers feel supported by colleagues, coaches, school leaders and the opportunities they receive and have made growth in chosen areas in the professional learning standards continuum.

- The vast majority of staff engage in structured professional collaborations using an inquiry approach to systematically analyze student and teacher work to improve learning outcomes for students.
  - Teachers and support staff regularly look at students work in order to refine teacher work and classroom instruction for three levels of learners. As a result of examining the needs of students and developing interventions and modified lessons, credit accumulation has increased. Last year students who entered the school with less than eleven credits earned an average of five credits in one year at the school. This year new students with less than eleven credits earned an average of six credits in their first two trimesters, demonstrating a clear increase without even completing the third trimester of the year.
- The school has successfully developed internal and external capacity to support the social, emotional and academic growth of their students.
  - CAMBA offers a multitude of resources for teacher, students and their families. Advocate counselors funded through CAMBA work with teachers to provide monthly case conferences that offer teachers a range of support in working with their students. Many teachers went through the Educators for Social Responsibility training and are now in the process of turn keying the information to newer staff members. Through their collaborative efforts, weighted regents pass rates in nearly every content area increased from the previous year.
  - Medger Evers College has full time support staff members that support a cohort of forty targeted students. Their primary focus is on improving the attendance for these students and they offer a range of incentives. CAMBA supports these efforts by helping to organize paid learning to work internships for students. As a result of their combined efforts the average attendance which is 66% for the school, is 74% for the cohort of 40 students working with Medger Evers College and is an average of 82% for students participating in the internship program.
- School leaders have developed systems to regularly evaluate professional collaborations and systematically use student assessment data and classroom observations to evaluate classroom instruction and mentoring supports.
  - Inquiry teams regularly use a rubric to assess if they are focused on the instructional agenda of the school and to monitor their use of the inquiry process. As a result, teams are constantly improving their inquiry practice, strengthening their community, building leadership skills and holding themselves accountable for the work that they do.
  - The principal has been strategic in identifying internal capacity and developing roles within the school to grow and challenge staff members. The Main Inquiry Group serves as place to evaluate the effectiveness of professional learning teams and particular staff members that are driving them. As a result staff members are gaining leadership capacity and feel that they have opportunities to grow and learn as professionals.

## Areas for improvement

- Strengthen existing curriculum maps and units to include opportunities for consistent cognitive engagement across subject areas through the incorporation of inquiry based learning opportunities.
  - In one class students were asked to complete a choice board offering a variety of tasks challenging students to be teachers', and writers in order to demonstrate the content. However, instruction requiring higher order thinking was not present consistently across classrooms. As a result, the majority of students were engaged in tasks that did not ask them to take on higher order thinking required of mathematicians, scientists, historians, researchers or college students. As a result, students are not being pushed to develop higher order thinking skills.
- Build on the current benchmark assessments to develop authentic performance based assessments that are aligned to curriculum and enable teachers to identify strengths and needs of students.
  - The school has a consistent benchmarking process, which includes regular examination of established classroom benchmarks. There is little evidence that benchmarks are well-aligned to the classroom instruction and how well they assess key skills. There is no common understanding of what constitutes a benchmark at the school. Further alignment of classroom instruction to authentic performance based benchmarks would This inconsistency limits the school's ability to provide a clearer sense of how instruction is impacting learning, while challenging all students to perform at their highest ability.
- Continue to support teachers' abilities to differentiate instruction so that tasks accommodate different learning styles and needs, questioning extends thinking, and challenges students at all levels.
  - Teachers show evidence of using flexible grouping and a learning styles inventory to group students. The classroom challenge corners provide opportunities for students to access content libraries in classrooms as well as an opportunity to continue or expand their thinking or learn something new. However, while students were grouped based on ability or learning style, all groups completed the same task. As a result, there were missed opportunities for providing purposeful and strategic differentiation and scaffolding which would have enabled them to target specific students for specific learning experiences rather than providing the same learning experience for all students.
- Expand on existing data collection systems to support administrators, parents and students in tracking and analyzing results of benchmarks, the impact of interventions and next steps for students.
  - Currently the school uses Skedula to track class grades. Teachers, administrators and advocate counselors have access to this data. However, systems are not yet in place to enable students, teachers, parents and administrators to better understand the benchmark skills

students are working on and mastering. Therefore, parents are not yet able to play a strong role in helping students develop skills and the administration does not have comprehensive data on student struggles and successes in order to make further adjustments to school wide goals and plans.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Metropolitan Diploma Plus	UD	D	P	WD
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		<b>X</b>		
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				<b>X</b>
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			<b>X</b>	

**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**

<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
-----------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------