

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Intermediate School Q077

**976 Seneca Avenue
Ridgewood
NY 11385**

Principal: Joseph Miller

Dates of review: January 31-February 1, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Madelene Chan

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Intermediate School 077 is a middle school with 1143 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 4% Black, 72% Hispanic, 14% White, and 10% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 93.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has created a coherent curriculum that emphasizes key standards that are linked across grades and subjects, supporting students' various learning needs.
 - The school has definitive curriculums across content areas that are matched to standards and prepare students for readiness at the next level of learning. The instructional team is able to clearly define and rationalize the selection of each standard resulting in thematic endurance for subjects across grade levels. As a result, students are able to make connections between different subjects, like science and math, and draw conclusions based on their tasks of choice.
 - Academic planning is a process that involves analyzing student work with a comparison to formative and summative assessments, in addition to exit slips, student conferences and teacher observations. There is ample evidence that students are being challenged because groups of students have the ability to choose their own tasks based on the teacher's presentation of the lesson. The engagement to the task is evident in discussions where students share why the work is important to them and how the practice will help them in the real world.
- Teachers use data to develop tasks that accommodate individual learning styles so that students are highly engaged in high levels of instruction.
 - Teachers across the grades meet to discuss students' individual needs through a learning styles inventory. Grade 8 math teachers created a curriculum on transformations that has students work autonomously with the teacher as the facilitator. Students work with peers who have like learning styles, make choices about their learning and take risks based on their decisions regarding the tasks. Teachers incorporate students' learning styles into daily instruction and tasks. For example, students with special needs are offered rigorous work on iPads during specific blocks of instructional time. The impact has indicated positive results on informal assessments supporting the need for a tactile approach for special needs students with their comprehension and writing practice.
 - Teachers use various forms of assessments to differentiate students' instruction. The impact of this practice has enabled students with varying degrees of understanding to work with peers who have similar styles and develop the abilities to take risks and assume ownership over their learning.
- The principal's strategic leadership promotes organizational decisions that support school, teacher team, and classroom level practices with a focus on improving student outcomes.
 - After a careful evaluation of the English language learner (ELL) program the principal created a co-teaching model eliminating the pull-out language program. In turn a new teacher was hired and trained in ELL strategies thus integrating all content areas with language approaches to learning and yielding significant gains on the portion of the New York State English as a Second Language Assessment for Speaking and current informal assessments given on a regular basis.
 - With an eye on closing the achievement gap for ELLs and students with disabilities the principal reassessed the hiring strategies of the staff and put an ELL teacher and a math coach in place to offer intervention strategies to

struggling students. This resulted in improved pre and post assessment scores for students in math as well as inquiry meetings focused on the specific instructional goals being addressed by these expert teachers.

- The instructional team effectively uses observations, teacher data, and provides regular and direct feedback to teachers to elevate school-wide instructional practices.
 - Teachers complete a pedagogical needs assessment followed by inter-visitations and instructional rounds involving administration, staff, and parents. This process leads to teachers implementing and owning effective strategies in major content areas and has yielded stronger awareness of pedagogical needs. Veteran teachers participate in professional development with opportunities to turnkey what is learned in the capacity of becoming a mentor or master teacher. Other pedagogical supports range from incorporating rigor into each of the workshop model tasks to develop stronger observations that have shown improvement across the grades in students' writing skills.
 - A succinct process and robust criteria is used for teachers' completing probation, including a tri-annual analysis of students' work products, the creation of a teacher portfolio, and coaching sessions to improve teacher planning. This enables the administration to provide specific next steps that lead to focus areas to observe in follow up class visits.
- The school culture embraces a philosophy that all members are a strong unit who support one another both academically and emotionally creating an environment that supports progress towards the school's learning goals.
 - The administration and instructional team uses different sources of data to determine the monthly progress of students on an emotional level. The guidance counselors' work with students to develop personal goals regarding what students can do to achieve these goals. Based on a review of these sessions, occurrence reports in bullying issues have significantly decreased.
 - Assistant principals, guidance counselors, and the SAPIS worker are "go-to" people for students in need of emotional or academic assistance. The peer mediation allows students to offer suggestions to peers in conflict under the supervision of a staff member. Hence, students build leadership skills, improve their academic skills in communication and writing, and have more of an awareness of how students in need are feeling. One student said, "Peer mediation shows me what it is like to walk in someone else's shoes."
- Teachers examine data to determine strengths and needs so that adjustments are made to curriculum and pedagogy that excel all students towards progress.
 - Teams of teachers work diligently to identify the needs and strengths of level 2 stalled ELLs by collecting and analyzing State reading scores in comparison to informal assessments. The instructional team regularly reviews the results with classroom teachers who then adjust instruction to show more tactile approaches to learning. As a result, ELLs are succeeding with these strategies and with the assistance of reading interventions before and after school.
 - Based on data analysis, teachers adjusted their instructional strategies by incorporating a range of vocabulary words aligned with visual cues, offering suggestions about similar content students had read about, and tapping into students' prior knowledge. These techniques enabled teachers to ramp up

students' writing skills to a higher level of vocabulary, content, and engagement of the reader.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish greater consistency in communicating to parents children's needs of and school expectations so they can collaborate in school decisions affecting students.
 - Parents are aware of the curriculum and the evolving State standards however; there is no tangible system in place to regularly communicate high expectations to students and parents so that various levels of competencies can be shared.
 - Parents are very willing to participate in activities that will benefit their children and the school. Although opportunities are afforded to families to participate in important school activities, a greater motivation needs to be provided so that parents can become active leaders in purposeful school activities.
- Extend and expand collaboration with parents to increase the capacity to assist in their child's learning and to enable them to track progress towards attaining measurable and achievable goals.
 - Teachers reach out to parents through phone calls and quarterly report cards, but at this time there is no evidence to regularly share progress with parents. Without more structures in place to enable ongoing discussions involving their child's' progress towards meeting standards, parents are not certain of the next instructional steps for their children.
 - Due to fulfilling a recent vacancy the school is in a transitional period regarding the services provided to families that would help them track student progress over time. Based on this situation, parents are in need of more workshops to help families use resources like ARIS to better understand student performance.
- Refine structures to evaluate interim goals and benchmarks for school-wide plans so that progress can be measured, readjustments made, and success determined.
 - The school has a practice of planning student centered learning goals for the year. At this time there is a need to examine the ways in which progress is being measured in relation to interim goals to reach the highest level of success.
 - Interim goals are set for all students. At this time the school is working on an evaluative practice to determine whether those goals are proactive or if they need to be revised for groups and individual students.
- Develop stronger structures that evaluate assessment and data systems in order to strengthen policies and practices across the school.
 - Teachers offer feedback regarding students' work, but grading philosophies remain inconsistent across the school. The school is working towards a grading system that is transparent and clearly communicates a rationale for teachers' responses to students' work, conveying high expectations and purposeful next steps that can be articulated by the students.
 - Although teams of teachers and individual staff members use data for a variety of reasons the school is working on ways to determine whether the data is being disaggregated and organized in the most productive way to benefit all users.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Intermediate School 77	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