

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**Thomas A Dooley**

**25Q107**

**167-02 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Flushing  
NY 11358**

**Principal: James Phair**

**Dates of review: February 10 - 11, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Danielle DiMango**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Thomas A Dooley is an elementary school with 932 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 27% Hispanic, 22% White, and 48% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 96%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- All students benefit from a caring environment created and fostered by the school community that ensures their social-emotional learning and academic success.
  - The principal embraces the diverse community of learners within the school by teaching acceptance and tolerance through a variety of academic and arts programs. Students and their families, including subgroups, communicate that they feel safe, supported and take pride in being part of the school.
  - Students take responsibility for their learning and support the positive environment within the school. They spoke very highly of the “students as partners” activity where children use rubrics and other instructional tools to assist their peers in reaching unit goals or targeted areas of weakness. Programs such as this are infused within the school culture and build trust to increase learning outcomes.
- Teachers work effectively in structured inquiry teams that result in coordinated efforts to improve pedagogy and student learning.
  - Teacher teams meet weekly and take on rotational leadership roles to plan and present during inquiry meetings. With support from the data specialist, they examine student outcomes identified from ACUITY, ARIS and trends culled from student work. As a result of one round of data study this year, teachers selected instructional materials to develop inference and predicting skills in reading as well as targeting writing skills. This has resulted in a school wide practice of connecting student work to curricular goals, the sharing of best practices and classroom intervisitations throughout the year.
- The school community engages in shared responsibility for student learning and takes an active role in communicating high expectations to enhance student outcomes.
  - The school regularly engages in celebrating students, such as honor roll and attendance recognition, student government activities and student participation in organizing and designing the community recognized “Music in the Air” performance at the end of each year. As a result, students and parents actively participate in supporting the school’s philosophy of developing high level scholarship and leadership opportunities for students throughout the community.
  - School leaders and staff provide the parents with a variety of supports to enable them to collaborate and convey high expectations that support student learning. In addition to training parents in the use of a variety of available data systems, the school also offers parent book clubs modeled around the same format used in the classrooms, invites parents into school for student publishing parties where parents are editors of student work and offers English as a second language classes for parents which include effective communication with the school as part of the curriculum. This has resulted in high parent involvement within the school and a shared focus around student success.

- The school leaders and staff consistently collaborate with students and their families to communicate students' strengths and goals to support student progress.
  - The school regularly engages in open lines of communication that provide parents and students with opportunities for discussions around student progress. In addition to report cards, interim progress reports, and discussions with parents using ARIS and ACUITY results, there is a school wide practice where teachers send letters to parents at the beginning of every unit of study outlining content, skills and learning goals. Parents communicate that this practice provides them with a clear understanding of what children are learning, helps them to plan with staff to support learning needs and increases home school communication promoting student growth.
- The principal makes strategic organizational decisions that encourage interdisciplinary planning and teacher collaboration to support the diverse learning needs of student learners and the schools' instructional goals
  - At the end of each year, the administration analyzes data with teachers to formulate early academic intervention and language acquisition classes for struggling learners for the following school year. This practice impacts the learning outcomes of the neediest subgroups throughout the school.
  - The principal programs time in the schedule to allow cluster and grade teachers to team teach. As a result, students engage in interdisciplinary lessons in the areas of literacy, science, social studies and the arts. Additionally, cluster teachers play a more active role in aligning their programs to the school wide instructional goals.
- The administration supports the differentiated learning needs of the staff and encourages opportunities for leadership roles to turnkey best practices that will improve student outcomes.
  - The principal utilizes the supports of the network team, AUSSIE and other professional growth opportunities suggested by teachers to provide targeted support for the diverse needs of teachers. These efforts effectively promote professional growth with an emphasis placed on the emerging common core state standards.
  - The principal supports faculty collaboration and sharing of best practices by providing teachers scheduled time to turn-key professional development. As a result, teachers feel supported by one another and are comfortable going to each other for help to improve pedagogy.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Increase the rigor of academic tasks and work products aligned to prioritized school wide standards to develop extended thinking.
  - Last spring, the school began the development of new curriculum maps in an effort to focus on key reading standards revealed through student data as well as targeted writing skills from the emerging common core standards. However, at this time, not every teacher has begun to implement this

curriculum. Therefore, some lessons offer limited opportunities for students to engage in higher order thinking.

- Throughout the school, student tasks and classroom expectations vary in rigor. In one second grade math class, the teacher repeatedly asked the students basic, lower level questions about arrays. In another second grade math class, the teacher had the students engaged in a variety of stations where they were working in groups based on ability with rigorous tasks that focused on the same topic. These inconsistencies in instruction limit student growth.
- Expand the use of differentiated learning activities to provide appropriately challenging tasks to maximize student learning.
  - Although the administration and teacher teams are able to talk to differentiation of instruction, there is limited evidence in teacher plans or classroom activities that reflect purposeful groupings aligned to achievement levels, tasks that accommodate different learning styles or questioning that extends thinking. This results in generalized activities that do not target the needs of the variety of learners throughout the school.
  - In some classrooms, students were able to express their own areas of strength and need and identify the skills and higher order thinking necessary to complete a task. In other rooms students followed directions, completed their tasks but were not connected to what they were learning from the assignment. Finally, a variety of classrooms were teacher directed lessons. These inconsistent practices lead to uneven levels of student engagement and active participation learning.
- Establish a consistent approach to using formative and summative assessments so teachers can have the information they need to more accurately assess their students and make strategic curricular and instructional adjustments to improve student outcomes.
  - The school is working to establish benchmarking tools aligned to the newly developed curriculum but this is not an embedded practice at this time. The current assessment tools are seemingly distinct from the school wide goals. While teams of teacher do create and discuss common assessments to evaluate curriculum and instruction, classroom level student outcome data is inconsistently analyzed limiting opportunities to set targeted goals, effectively differentiate instruction and to accurately measure student progress.
- Review and refine formal and informal teaching observation tools that provide teachers with targeted feedback and next steps to elevate instructional expectations aligned to the school wide goals.
  - The school currently uses an alternative observation model which includes verbal feedback as communication to a majority of staff. However, ongoing written feedback within formal and informal observations that supports teacher work in the instructional vision of the school is not evident. As a result, it is difficult to track teacher growth over time in relation to the specific goals that the school has set for themselves and administrative support for teachers in assessing pedagogy and providing next steps varies throughout the school.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Thomas A. Dooley 25Q107</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<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>
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