



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**School of Diplomacy 11x370**

**Middle School**

**3710 Barnes Avenue**

**Bronx**

**NY 10467**

**Principal: John Scalice**

**Dates of review: March 2-3, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Elizabeth A. White**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

Diplomacy is a middle school with 448 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises of 65% Black, 30% Hispanic, 1% White, 3% Asian and 1% other students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 87.2%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty make purposeful curricular decisions aligned to state standards resulting in increased interdisciplinary coherence.
  - Teachers have embarked on implementing key writing standards via themes across disciplines. For example, The Harlem Renaissance is a theme running across grade 8 English language arts, social studies and arts curriculum resulting in curricular alignment.
  - Subgroup data is applied to decisions regarding the refinement of curriculum and project-based assessment resulting in tasks designed for students of varying ability levels.
- Strategic organizational decisions have resulted in increased supports that foster improved student achievement.
  - Technology lab instruction allows for research-based assignments for all students, block scheduling provides for more time on task in English language arts and math and ability group mainstreaming for Special education students results in increased needs-based academic support for learners. Positive behavior support counselor assignments foster a mentor relationship between grade level teachers and students to provide social emotional guidance that effectively supports academic improvement efforts.
- Positive attitudes towards learning results in an improved school climate that's conducive to learning.
  - The school's positive behavior intervention supports initiative builds mutual respect between teachers and students in classrooms and has resulted in a decline in student suspensions and incidents as compared to this time last year.
  - Students are known by adults and are encouraged by teacher counselors who guide their academic and social emotional development resulting in an atmosphere of accountability and support.
- School leaders and faculty are adept at gathering and analyzing data using information to impact instructional decisions at the grade team and classroom level.
  - The school effectively uses Acuity DY0 assessments in collaboration with summative unit projects to identify the needs of student subgroups, like special education students and students who have repeated a grade. This has resulted in effective student support efforts based on skill proficiency analysis which teachers consistently use to create student profiles that strategically inform instructional differentiation efforts.

- The school provides consistent engagement with students and families in an open exchange of communication regarding student achievement resulting in informed student progress monitoring.
  - Parents have regular interactions via email and telephone with school leaders and faculty regarding the progress of their students. In addition, the school's use of SNAP Grades web-based program keeps parents informed weekly on attendance, assignments and the progress of their students enabling families to support student achievement.
  - The school offers 'Family Curriculum Nights' in all major subjects throughout the year enabling parents to better understand student performance and collaborate with the school to support student learning.

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

- Continue to develop teacher pedagogy to ensure alignment of curricula and implementation of learning tasks to meet student learning needs.
  - The faculty meets every third Monday to align curriculum and plan for varying student needs in terms of time, work choice and difficulty levels of tasks. However, across the school differentiated teaching strategies are still developing. In addition, the level of rigor is inconsistent resulting in uneven student supports particularly for higher achievers.
- Continue to track the achievement of learning goals, particularly at the teacher team level, to build uniformity across classes over time.
  - While teacher teams are adept at gathering and analyzing data, using information to impact school-wide instructional decisions at the inquiry team level is not yet systemic. This results in a minimized opportunity for significant effect on student gains.
  - The school has not yet adopted common classroom level assessment tools, like pre-assessments and diagnostic tests, resulting in a lack of consistency in grading policy within grades and disciplines.
- Formalize teacher professional development supports to bolster school-wide instructional practices that align with student achievement.
  - Currently, observations are largely informal and do not provide written feedback linked to student outcomes. This results in a limited ability to match teacher development needs to supports. Likewise, professional development opportunities are limited to a few, focusing mainly on teachers of need and mandated teachers limiting the school-wide impact of teacher development efforts.
- Strengthen professional development to support collaborative teacher teams in developing inquiry-based approaches.
  - While teams of teachers meet regularly; often teacher team time is spent on non-instructional pursuits such as compliance concerns. Focus on instructional student supports is inconsistent resulting in limited positive impact on student

achievement. Currently, administrators lead these team meetings resulting in limited teacher leadership development and voice on decisions that impact student learning.

- Embed student outcome results into collaborative teacher time and classroom practice evaluations to improve pedagogy.
  - Currently, inquiry team evaluative processes are inconsistent and the capacity of teams is not yet determined resulting in a missed opportunity to leverage teacher collaboration to bolster student achievement school-wide.
  - Assessment of the link between student data with individual teacher evaluation is not yet an embedded practice resulting in a misalignment between instructional practice and student progress as well limiting targeted teacher support.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: School of Diplomacy</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>

<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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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					
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<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>