

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**DeWitt Clinton High School**

**High School 440**

**100 West Mosholu Parkway South  
Bronx  
NY 10468**

**Principal: Geraldine Ambrosio**

**Dates of review: March 1 – 3, 2011  
Lead Reviewer: Michael L. Schurek**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

DeWitt Clinton High School is a high school with 4411 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 29% Black, 62% Hispanic, 2% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 81.3%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Very extensive networks of support personnel work in tandem with numerous external agencies to ensure that the personal, social, physical and emotional needs of students and families are met.
  - The school has established robust capacity to provide child/youth services to students and families through numerous partnerships that work closely with school staff to meet student needs. These organizations include numerous colleges, an on-site hospital health clinic and a nursery education program for the children of attending students. These systems contribute to increased college admission rates.
  - Teachers attend workshops in respect for all, conflict resolution, suicide prevention, bereavement and conflict resolution and confer with network consultants to support student social-emotional learning. Recent incident increases have been reduced through the school's self-contained Governor's program. As a result, the school continues to maintain a safe environment despite its large size.
- Staff gathers a range of relevant data across most subjects to understand individual student and relevant subgroup performance, progress and learning needs.
  - Teachers scrutinize Aris data and regularly examine teacher-developed common assessments that align with school-wide key standards centered on writing. This school-wide practice enables staff to adjust curriculum maps and pacing calendars while providing pertinent feedback regarding these instructional decisions.
  - Teachers meet weekly in small learning community and department teams and supplement summative data by examining student work samples, formative and periodic assessments and scantron-based testing results to item analyze and identify problem areas for students in need of additional support. As a result, differentiated instructional strategies such as flexible grouping and tiered assignments are utilized in many subjects and grades.
- The principal is creating a learning community that is focused on student outcomes with a vision to accelerate learning.
  - The principal's vision is embraced by staff and apparent during the collaborative team meetings that serve as the basis for moving the school forward. School goals focus on literacy across curriculum, differentiated instruction and credit accumulation increases that are designed utilizing feedback from prior quality reviews and progress reports. This ongoing focus has enabled the school to increase credit accumulation rates over the past three years.
  - Teachers and administrators conduct rigorous goal setting and action planning each spring utilizing copious data and their small learning community structure to increase personalization and support by teachers,

students and families. As a result, all constituents are able to articulate school goals in a supportive fashion.

- Administrators collect an array of student performance data to pinpoint trends, strengths and areas of need to drive instruction and determine intervention structures.
  - School leaders and faculty rigorously examine a broad range of summative data that is supplemented by staff-designed common assessments in many subject areas to understand student needs and intervention requirements. Recent attendance data triggered the identification of 110 ninth graders with high middle school absenteeism rates. As a result of this data, these students receive individual attendance intervention services through a newly hired community based organization to better meet their needs and improve credit accumulation.
  - Administrators and teachers regularly analyze Periodic Assessment and other classroom assessment tools to identify student subgroup needs and adjust school practices to increase outcomes. As a result, non-fiction books are replacing fiction texts in English language learner classes to support vocabulary development across all subject areas.
- School action plans link interim goals to targeted benchmarks at specific intervals to monitor progress and make adjustments along the way to accelerate outcomes.
  - School leaders have refined action planning as suggested in the previous quality review by measuring progress towards end-of-year goals during the school year to ensure goal achievement and allow adjustments. As a result, course pacing is regularly adjusted and students are provided with early interventions to ensure they stay on track to graduate. Scholarship report interim measurements in November and January indicate 11th grade credit accumulation rates are increasing by 3.5%.
  - School goals align quality review improvement areas, the comprehensive educational plan, the principals performance review, annual yearly progress, Regents data, advanced placement results, Regents competency test findings and the Common Core State Standards to support the school's long term aspiration of graduating all students prepared to successfully attend post secondary education. This consistent focus has enabled the school to meet adequate yearly progress requirements in their graduation rates for the past three years.

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

- Deepen academic rigor by consistently designing challenging tasks and utilizing effective questioning that elicits higher-order thinking and extends learning for students on all levels.
  - Administrators and faculty regularly examine robust amounts of data and use this information to emphasize key standards for students and adjust curricula to meet student needs and college readiness criteria. However, rigorous academic tasks are inconsistently utilized in classrooms across the school, especially in classes containing lower achieving students,

thereby limiting opportunities to accelerate student learning for a diversity of learners. As a result, adequate yearly progress targets in English language arts and mathematics for students with disabilities and limited English proficiency are not met.

- Strengthen teacher pedagogy by ensuring that school-wide instructional practices and routines, including differentiation, are practiced by all teachers to enhance student engagement.
  - While administrators communicate a vision of student-centered classrooms utilizing differentiation to meet student needs, these practices vary greatly within classrooms across the school and lead to uneven levels of student engagement. For instance, many teachers use cooperative learning techniques and some create tiered classroom assessments; however, almost all classes utilize same-leveled materials. Consequently current practice deters from the school's belief of what leads to successful learning.
- Expand the use of the school's observation tools to include an analysis of school data and work and encourage teachers to reflect on their practice and professional growth to support a coherent school culture.
  - Differentiation, higher-order questioning techniques and assessment practices are focus areas of professional development. While the further development of these skills is supported by the majority of faculty as evidenced during classroom visits and interviews, pedagogy is inconsistent in this regard and does not support a coherent school culture. In addition, observation practices utilize the California teaching standards and the quality review observation template, however, student work products are not analyzed as part of management decision-making.
- Enhance the goal setting practices of teachers to include using data to set differentiated learning goals for students in need of additional support to target their needs, track their progress and raise outcomes.
  - Some teachers set subject learning goals for subgroups and students in need of additional support based on a careful analysis of student assessment data. These classroom level goals are used to track progress and bring about changes in classroom practice such as the use of spiraling, additional re-teaching methods and the use of regrouping strategies to accelerate student learning. However, this practice is inconsistent in classes containing subgroups and teacher teams track data for targeted students but have not yet used this information to set goals for these students.
- Augment school organizational plans to ensure that all teachers receive suitable support from the school's specialists to improve classroom practice by engaging all students in tasks requiring higher order thinking skills.
  - The school maintains adequate numbers of assistant principals and coaches for its large size, however, lesson plans are not perused with enough regularity to ensure that all teachers are effectively utilizing higher order thinking skills to accelerate student learning. In addition, many honors classes demonstrate rigorous activities while some classes containing student subgroups do not, indicating hiring and assignment practices that do not support meeting school goals and student needs.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: DeWitt Clinton High School / 10X440	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score		X		
<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>	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	
<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>	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		

<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?			<b>X</b>				
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?		<b>X</b>					
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			<b>X</b>				
<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?		<b>X</b>					
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?				<b>X</b>			
<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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?			<b>X</b>				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		<b>X</b>					
<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>