

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Charles O. Dewey School

K136

**4001 Fourth Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11232**

Principal: Eric Sackler

Dates of review: October 27 - 28, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Charles O. Dewey School is a Junior High-middle school with 495 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 3% Black, 85% Hispanic, 0% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 35% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 92.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has a refined curriculum which is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. (1.1)
 - This summer, in collaboration with their newly identified Education Partnership Organization, school leaders and teachers revised curriculum maps in English Language Arts and mathematics to ensure alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards. As a result, vocabulary development is now a focus in all content areas and students have begun using academic language in class discussions.
 - A newly instituted universal protocol for the analysis of student work enables teacher teams to coherently reflect on student writing, especially from English Language Learners and special needs students. This ensures that work is consistently aligned to the curricula demands. Consequently, the level of rigor has risen in both self-contained integrated and co-teaching classrooms, as evidenced by the use of a New York State writing rubric schoolwide.
- A culture of mutual respect embraces all children and adults and supports the school community in working towards the highest levels of achievement. (1.4)
 - The school's familial tone reflects commitment, concern, and a genuine knowledge of all students by school staff. Strong protocols, such as automated phone calls and home visits are coupled with trust filled relationships among teachers and students. These efforts and targeted incentive programs such as the "I Will Graduate" initiative have resulted in attendance data currently at 95%, a high level for a middle school.
 - The school has a student government with representatives from each class, including special needs students. In addition, this year a student member was added to the School Leadership Team, providing student insight into school wide decisions. Students commented that, "They (teachers) are always there to help you!" Thus, students are solidly connected to the school and believe that it supports their growth.
- Multi-lingual outreach enables parents to understand all of their children's needs and engage in school decision-making to promote success. (2.4)
 - To address the school's large English Language Learner population, the school employs a bilingual parent coordinator, mails all notices to parents in both English and Spanish and provides translation at all School Leadership Team meetings, parent teacher conferences and workshops. Consequently parents consistently report that they feel welcomed and supported by the school, are comfortable sharing their concerns with teachers and are aware of their children's academic and social emotional needs and strengths.
 - Bilingual, computer workshops on the use ARIS Parent Link, and the school's electronic grading and student progress system were conducted

during Curriculum Nights, Parent Teacher Conferences and individually for parents with concerns. This has increased the accessibility of student information and deepened parental understanding of what constitutes student success.

- The school has a clearly defined plan for future development that grounds all practices in improved student achievement. (3.1)
 - Working with the school's Educational Partnership Organization, school leaders have developed a three year plan with targeted goals, which are derived from summative assessment data, annual yearly progress mandates and item skills analysis of student needs. The goals are then adjusted and delineated in the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan and the Principal's Performance Review on a yearly basis. They focus on raising the level of student success by improving instructional outcomes for general education students, English Language Learners and other subgroup students. As a result vocabulary development and enhanced writing skill instruction are seen in all classrooms and have already positively impacted the quality of oral and written work.
- Numerous partnerships enhance students' social and emotional growth through real world experiences that promote academic success. (4.4)
 - The school provides professional development in the Ramapo protocols for classroom management. In addition, a number of citywide and school specific initiatives such as the anti-bullying squad and special needs Phase One behavioral supports cultivate a safe and respectful tone. This has fostered a commitment to academic achievement exemplified by the school's Honor Society assemblies three times a year.
 - The arts, sports and environmental studies deepen experiential learning. Partnerships with the Brooklyn Museum and the Guggenheim Museum, as well as community based collaborations, such as the in-house health center through Lifeline's Center for Life, and college tours, support the school's commitment to the whole child and provide opportunities for students to expand their vision of future career and college possibilities. This has resulted in high levels of attendance and trust at the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the level of differentiation in all classrooms to ensure that diverse learners are consistently prepared for college and career. (1.2)
 - Although instruction in all classrooms is aligned to the curriculum and student grouping reflects a belief in small group instruction, the quality of the strategies used during grouping is inconsistent across grades. Questioning does not regularly support higher order thinking and tasks are not reliably stimulating. Consequently students are not sufficiently challenged, limiting their ability to engage in meaningful work.
 - While most teachers place students into small groups, the depth and duration of the group work is not universally supportive of accelerated student learning. High functioning students are often asked to serve as peer tutors rather than deepening their own knowledge and support for

special needs students and English language learners does not consistently target defined needs. As a result, student grouping does not continuously leverage academic progress.

- Ensure that the use of resources and technology is intentionally targeted to support students, especially subgroups, in meeting defined goals. (1.3)
 - The school has an extensive array of technology and has purchased a range of software programs to specifically address English language learners and struggling students. However, the use of smart boards is often a variation on whiteboard work. In addition, the vast number of programs being introduced does not allow for reflective evaluation. Further, teacher capacity in the use of these programs has not yet been fully developed, resulting in implementations that are not strategic and have a narrow impact on student success.
 - Teacher assignments have been carefully reviewed and adjustments have been made that reflect greater support for subgroup needs, by targeting teacher strengths. For example, an English as a Second language coordinator has been hired and the literacy coach was replaced. Scheduling also reflects consistent timeframes for teacher team meetings. However, the effect of these changes is only beginning to be seen in differentiated instructional practices, limiting student language development.
- Develop common assessments in all content areas that align with the curriculum and enable teachers to define and prioritize student needs. (2.2)
 - Although teachers meet at consistent intervals and use a protocol to reflect on student work, the use of common assessment is not yet systematized. Consequently, classroom data provides limited insight into grade level trends and subgroup needs, hindering the ability of teachers to prescriptively focus instruction and improve student achievement.
 - Ongoing checks for comprehension are conducted inconsistently during classroom instruction. While some teachers conference strategically with students to assess progress daily, others merely ask for correct answers. As a result, knowledge of student understanding is not successfully utilized to adjust instruction as a school wide practice, limiting the potential for augmented student support.
- Deepen the level of feedback to teachers through rubric delineated, frequent observations that clarify expectations for improved teacher practice. (4.1)
 - The school is using the Danielson Framework to reflect on teacher practice and school leaders have already conducted one round of informal observations. However, feedback does not always provide specifically targeted next steps and a clear timeline for follow-up. Further, a codified, differentiated staff development plan which incorporates these features is not yet fully in place for all staff. Therefore, deepening instructional capacity to enhance achievement is hampered.
- Systematize the review of teacher teams to ensure the understanding of the inquiry process and deepen the quality of teacher collaboration. (5.4)

- Collaborative teacher teams at grade and department levels are the norm schoolwide. In addition, the assistant principal usually attends most inquiry team meetings. The minutes from these meetings are then collected and reviewed by school leaders. However, the work of the teams does not consistently reflect the inquiry process. Some teams do not specifically focus on a targeted student population as a barometer of instructional practice. Further, these current structures have not highlighted teacher leaders or had a uniform impact or enhanced student success. The need for a more structured and codified approach to monitoring effectiveness, with clearly defined protocols for follow up and support, thereby limits the impact of teaming on instruction and the expansion of distributive leadership schoolwide.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Charles O. Dewey School	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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?		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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?		X		
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?			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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?		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, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS?		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