

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**New Dorp High School**

**31R440**

**465 New Dorp Lane**

**Staten Island, New York 10306**

**Principal: Deirdre DeAngelis**

**Dates of review: December 5-7, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Aimee Horowitz**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

New Dorp High School is a High school with 2501 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 13% Black, 25% Hispanic, 52% White, 7% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 6% 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 2010 - 2011 was 88.5%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is well developed.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Students and families appreciate the school's focused efforts on maintaining a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment that supports students' academic and social emotional growth. (1.4)
  - As a result of the school's division into small learning communities (SLC), each with a dedicated assistant principal, teachers, a guidance counselor, and other support staff, the faculty, students and families report that each student is known well by both their guidance counselor and the SLC assistant principal. The assistant principal monitors students' progress and attendance through "kid talk", an online system, at weekly SLC meetings. They also monitor progress through "adopt a student", a program for those who need additional support. Counselors provide advisement and social emotional support via individual sessions, classroom visits, collaborating with teachers to ensure that students are setting and achieving goals, and by participating in "kid talk." Since 2008-2009 credit accumulation in grades 9-11 has increased 15.2%, the average completion rate for remaining Regents has increased by 22.1%, and weighted Regents passing percentages have increased in all core subjects.
  - Students' voices are heard through decision making on SLC and Student Councils as well as through the School Leadership Team and School Safety Committee. Students participate in morning meetings with the principal where they share their school concerns. For example, students provided input on the cafeteria redesign that includes student created murals representing each SLC, stationing safety agents in stairways to decrease incidents, placing recycling bins in hallways for easy access, and arranging for a series of anti-bullying assemblies. Students state, "Our principal is open minded; she makes time for us; she takes criticism; and we are valued by her." Students' active engagement in decision making processes increases their academic and social emotional growth as evidenced by the Learning Environment Survey results indicating that 87% of students feel welcome at school; 79% indicate being known by the adults in the building; 82% feel extra help is available if needed; and 87% feel safe at school. Improved scholarship and all sub-groups making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) provides further evidence that the school's environment supports student learning and growth.
- The principal's informed, purposeful, and highly effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school support growth in adult and student learning. (1.3)
  - Department teams meet four days per week to plan collaboratively, assess student work, create and revise curriculum maps, while SLC teams meet for "kid talk" to plan theme aligned learning experiences. The principal meets weekly with her instructional cabinet, SLC department leads, and network instructional coach to plan team meetings, assess progress towards department and school goals, and reassess professional development needs. As a result of ongoing collaboration and monitoring student work, instructional practices have elevated, leading to increased student engagement and accountable talk as evidenced by classroom work products reflecting improved writing and scholarship.

- Dividing the school into SLCs, each with a dedicated guidance counselor and teacher team, coupled with teachers looping with students, decreased total teacher and counselor load while fostering teacher accountability for student growth and achievement of school wide goals. Common planning time and intentional pairing of special and general education teachers supports teacher development and student progress. Special education teacher support services, rich with technological resources, staffed with special educators, many of whom are dual licensed, support students' academic and social emotional growth and aid them with the college process. Consequently, special education students as indicated on the school's Progress Report, ranked in the top 20% of schools citywide for growth.
- Frequent, strategic and focused observation feedback conveyed via a research based framework drive school wide and teacher goal setting and professional development and have improved teacher practice. (4.1)
  - The principal, and assistant principals, conduct frequent and focused observations that provide actionable feedback to staff aligned to a research based rubric. Teachers report, due to the rubric aligned observations and feedback, there is coherence between the goals they set and the specific recommendations they receive for next steps. Accordingly, all pedagogues share a common understanding of engaging, rigorous instruction that is translated into elevated practice as they progress towards meeting targeted goals for professional growth.
  - The administration and faculty use a research based rubric for diagnostic and self-assessment purposes. Observations provide teachers with feedback, noting strengths, weaknesses and actionable next steps with specific attention to questioning and writing strategies implemented in their classes. Follow up observations and conversations focus on monitoring teachers' progress towards meeting individual and school wide goals. The use of a rubric and a focus on questioning and writing strategies, coupled with self reflection, provide teachers with tools to assess current practices and identify their next steps, resulting in a better understanding of their own needs and how to improve their practice.
- The curriculum addresses strategically selected key standards tied to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and emphasizes higher order thinking skills that promote post secondary readiness in all grades. (1.1)
  - The school has purposefully aligned instruction to targeted goals and standards with classroom pedagogy across the curriculum, engaging students in rigorous common core aligned tasks during which they develop evidence based discourse and written pieces. Scaffolding of and explicit modeling in written tasks and consistent development of academic vocabulary support all students including English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities in completing tasks at a high level. Students report that as a result of the intensive evidence based writing curriculum, their performance levels since 8<sup>th</sup> grade have increased. Writing portfolios spanning three years, Global History and ELA Regents scores, along with current work are evidence that they are engaging in college readiness skills.
- Students and families are engaged in school decision making activities and regularly receive information on student performance resulting in strong support for the school's vision, student achievement, and success. (2.4)

- The principal, SLC leaders, and guidance counselors consistently engage families in decision making. All school leadership have open door policies and responds to parent concerns within twenty-four hours. Parents state that they recently discussed the need for a program on cyber-bullying and the school immediately put a program including assemblies with guest speakers in place. At SLC awards ceremonies, parents are recognized for their contributions and commitment to the school and partnership with other members of the school community to support student achievement. An online grading system provides students and families with information about progress in each course and assignments, along with emails from teachers regarding performance and behavior. While 40% of families used the online grading system last year, usage this year is above 60% as the school has a parent room with computers and provides weekly classes for parents to learn this system, as well as how to use computers. Through parent teacher conferences, SLC awards ceremonies celebrating academic achievement and social emotional growth, phone calls regarding attendance, emails from teachers regarding academic progress and behavior, and the school's open door policy, parents report that they feel engaged and are welcome to call or meet with their child's counselor or teachers at any time.
- Coupled with teachers' ongoing check for understanding, formative, interim and summative assessment data are consistently used to analyze student performance and target instruction to students' needs to accelerate growth. (2.2)
  - Teacher teams have created common baseline, formative and interim assessments to measure students' academic growth. These are used in conjunction with summative data along with school wide rubrics to analyze progress for multi-paragraph outlines, essay introductions and conclusions, and completed essays that provide staff with a deep understanding of each student's mastery of key standards. Teachers use this information to assess effectiveness of classroom level, curricular, and instructional decisions. As a result, the social studies team decided using evidence to support claims and refute counterclaims must be introduced earlier in the year and is revising their curriculum maps for next year. The math team introduced a word problem organizer requiring students to assess what the problem is asking, take notes about key information, define pertinent vocabulary, solve the problem, look again at the "ask" and write a response to the question posed. Consequently, greater numbers of students are attempting word problems, can pinpoint areas of difficulty, and more are solving problems correctly.
  - Classroom visits and teacher lesson plans reflect ongoing assessment and adjustments which result from an analysis of the assessment data. At strategic points in their lessons, teachers regularly use "turn and talk," "jot and talk," "thumbs up, thumbs down," exit passes and student self assessment of learning to check for understanding, to make students cognizant of their next learning steps, and target ongoing adjustments to meet students' needs. Teachers' consistent checks for understanding and their use of the data to make "on the spot" adjustments to their lessons have led to improved student writing as evidenced by increased Regents scores on the ELA, Global, and United States History exams and improvements on the long answer portions of math and science Regents.
- The school has established effective systems for school self evaluation, review and modification of curriculum, course sequences, practice and use of resources with a clear focus on improving student learning. (5.1)

- Analysis of student work, benchmark and Regents item analysis, scholarship data, and assessment of student engagement during instruction, guide the principal, her cabinet and department teams in regularly evaluating and adjusting curricular and instructional practices. This supports vertical and horizontal alignment to ensure that students are actively engaged in their learning while meeting expectations of the CCLS. Based on an item analysis of the Algebra II/ Trig Regents the math department recently modified curriculum maps for all courses such that requisite skills and concepts for success in Algebra II/Trig are intentionally taught in prerequisite courses, are spiraled back to, and continuously incorporated into new learning. To further increase student learning in mathematics, resources were allocated to allow math teachers to create videos where they model step-by-step problem solving strategies, which students can access from home, resulting in greater homework completion rates and increased passing rates in mathematics courses.

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

- Continue to differentiate tasks to meet the needs of high achieving students, while continuing to provide all students with the skills necessary to close the achievement gap and promote post secondary readiness. (1.2)
  - All teachers provide multiple entry points for students to access lessons, provide supports for struggling learners, and strive to engage students in higher order thinking through questioning and writing tasks calling for evidence to support claims or refute counter claims. However, most teachers do not provide extensions to support higher achieving students in deepening their learning and reaching their potential, thus limiting their achievement. Although questioning facilitates student participation, student to student dialogue, and accountable talk with use of academic vocabulary, questions of high cognitive challenge are not yet formulated by students and lessons are not guided by student inquiry Thus, not all students are pushed to think at higher levels, limiting self guided inquiry and reflection.
- Refine goal setting so that interim data based differentiated goals are set for subgroups of students so that all students are fulfilling their potential. (3.2)
  - While teachers and teacher teams consistently set interim and long term goals for individual and subgroups of students, such that the school made AYP in all subgroups and is successfully closing the achievement gap, the lack of differentiated goals and extensions for accelerated students who can perform at higher levels limits this group's progress.
- Enhance opportunities for teacher sharing and reflection to improve implementation of best instructional practices for all learners to increase leadership development opportunities and student achievement. (4.3)
  - While teachers consistently discuss their practice with peers and collaboratively plan and revise lessons, tasks, projects, and assessments, the lack of a formal teacher inter-visitation structure inhibits the full sharing of teacher practice, reflection, and growth as well as leadership development to the fullest extent. Provide further professional learning opportunities for teachers to support developing challenging tasks for all students, especially accelerated students, aligned to the CCLS to extend learning.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

|   |           |          |          |           |
|---|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>School name: New Dorp High School</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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?   |           |          |          | <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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?  |           |          |          | <b>X</b>  |
| 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?   |           |          |          | <b>X</b>  |
| 2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?  |           |          |          | <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?  |           |          |          | <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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?   |           |          |          | <b>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.**

| <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, 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?                        |           |          |          | <b>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.**

| <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, with particular attention to the CCLS? |           |          |          | <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>  |

**Quality Review Scoring Key**

|           |                       |          |                   |          |                   |           |                       |
|-----------|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| <b>UD</b> | <i>Underdeveloped</i> | <b>D</b> | <i>Developing</i> | <b>P</b> | <i>Proficient</i> | <b>WD</b> | <i>Well Developed</i> |
|-----------|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------------|