

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

DeWitt Clinton High School

High School 440

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

Principal: Geraldine Ambrosio

Dates of review: February 13 – 15, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Linda Trifon

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

DeWitt Clinton High School is a high school with 4,408 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 29% Black, 62% Hispanic, 02% White, and 07% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 77.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Internal and external partnerships provide students and families with targeted support services to accelerate the personal growth of students. (4.4)
 - Guidance counselors provide support to teachers, students and families to ensure that student social-emotional and academic needs are met. “The school’s college office works hand in hand with the guidance counselors to promote postsecondary readiness,” shared the principal. During the spring and fall, students and families participate in college fairs. School assemblies often include invited alumni and other community guest speakers to speak with students about college and career readiness resulting in an increase in students attending college.
 - Numerous external partnerships with community organizations and health related services provide invaluable support to students and families. For example, The Montefiore Health Clinic staffs a doctor, nurse, nurse practitioners and social workers that provide medical checkups, vaccinations, eye exams and family planning to students. The school’s Lyfe (Learning for Young Families through Education) program is for the children of students of DeWitt Clinton. With a capacity of 18 children ranging in ages from 2 months to 3 years, young children learn socialization skills, engage in fun activities and learning experiences outside the school. Good Shepherd, a community based organization, works with individual students and groups of students to increase attendance, problem solve with families and provides outreach services. These programs provide the social-emotional and academic supports to students and families and have resulted in students attending school regularly thus enabling them to focus on their academic studies.
- School leaders and staff work as a unified team to create a calm, respectful, and orderly environment for learning to take place. (1.4)
 - School leadership came together as a unified body to work through the logistical issues of an extremely large school. A behavior plan was created, additional security added and greater adult presence in the hallways, have had a significant impact. With the on-going support of the school safety office, the school’s efforts this year to create a safe environment conducive to teaching and learning has resulted in reduced suspension and incident reports.
 - Twenty-three guidance counselors meet with students twice a year. The counselors keep track of the students’ credit accumulation history, program choices and after-school activities. Teachers and guidance counselors work together to coordinate their efforts through the school’s small learning communities to support student’s academic success.
- The school engages students and families in on-going discussions regarding progress to ensure students are on track to making progress. (2.4)

- The school's phone master program is set up to remind parents of school meetings. Report cards are sent home three times a term/six times a year informing parents of student progress. If students are failing, report cards are sent home by the guidance counselors as well as with students to ensure that parents are kept abreast of student progress.
- The school reaches out to parents to encourage participation and provides incentives to accompany students on outings. Through open-school night, parent meetings, sports programs, Saturday classes and other parent workshops parent involvement has increased.
- School leaders and faculty develop tools that aggregate and organize data to make school-wide and classroom decisions. (2.3)
 - An on-line data program sorts and organizes assessment data enabling the school to identify performance trends. School leaders analyze student transcripts, Regents and Scantron data as well as scholarship reports to determine student schedules and necessary coursework. This has enabled the administration to determine the school's next steps to ensure that students are placed in appropriate programs and assigned the necessary coursework so that graduation requirements are met.
 - Teacher teams analyze test scores, mock Regents tests, summative and formative data to inform instructional decisions. The school's literacy program captures how students perform during reading activities. An assessment tool delineates a student's reading level performance over time. This information is discussed during guidance and teacher team meetings to determine interventions in an effort to increase progress.

What the school needs to improve

- Enrich the curriculum to ensure that the delivery of instruction leads to heightened levels of student engagement to maximize learning. (1.1)
 - The school is beginning to integrate the Common Core Learning Standards into its curriculum maps and the mathematics department has administered the Citywide performance tasks. However, tasks assigned to students in non-accelerated classes do not require students to use their higher order thinking skills. In a tenth grade English class students were learning about a rhyming scheme of a sonnet. Words used were: "cat, mouse, bat and house," and were placed next to the appropriate sonnet letters. All students had to write a sentence using these words. In a special education classroom, students were looking at pictures of Native Americans, jotting down what they saw. One student wrote, "I see a native tribe." And another, "A tribe eating and resting for battle." Students then took turns reading short paragraphs out loud. Assignments across grades and content areas do not cognitively challenge all students hampering progress.
- Ensure that instruction provides multiple opportunities for all students to access grade level texts to accelerate performance. (1.2)

- Teacher dominated lessons and questioning were generic, undifferentiated and lacked cognitive demands. Lessons do not have appropriate entry points for second language learners and students with disabilities as academic discourse is not present in classrooms. In a tenth grade inclusion class, the “Do Now” required students to describe their favorite place in at least 5 sentences. The teacher wrote on the board, “The big brown dog barks.” Students had to use an adjective to make it more descriptive. In a self contained mathematics class, students were required to write an equation in their notebooks and were copying down homework problems. Moreover, instruction for students that have had severe discipline issues is inconsistent with the goals of the higher standards articulated by the Common Core as students are separated both physically and pedagogically from the type of learning that takes place throughout the building. The lack of academic discourse in the majority of classrooms prevents students from heightened engagement. Extensions for higher performing students is not planned as they are paired with struggling students resulting in these learners not being consistently challenged.
- Use formative and summative data to establish differentiated learning goals for identified students to ensure that all students achieve success.(3.2)
 - At present, student learning goals are generic. For example, when asked about learning goals, one student replied, “To get a 90 on my tests.” And another said, “To do my homework on time.” And yet another, “To come prepared.” Precise goal setting for individual students and/or student subgroups is not embedded in the school. Analysis of student learning outcomes does not drive the setting of differentiated goals for identified students. As a result, specific supports to accelerate student learning cannot be planned.
 - Teachers and teacher teams analyze student assessment data which drive the decisions around interventions. However, the explicit analysis of student learning outcomes to establish timely and measurable differentiated learning goals that are related to grade-level curricula, is not embedded across the grades and subject areas. This prevents teachers and school leaders from effectively identifying student’s instructional needs so that learning is accelerated.
- Strengthen feedback to teachers to accurately capture strengths and next instructional steps to effectively manage staff development. (4.1)
 - School leaders introduced the school’s selected framework to teachers at the staff conference in September. Partial and formal observations using the research based rubric to measure teacher effectiveness began shortly thereafter. However, a review of observation reports indicates that teacher feedback does not always capture explicit next instructional steps that would strengthen teacher practice and have high impact on student achievement. For example, an observation report stated under the “areas for growth” section, “You have a genuine passion for your subject and you adapt your strategies to ensure that all your students learn.” And another, “You call the students by name when you want to get them back on task.” This general feedback prevents teachers from honing in on specific

attributes necessary to strengthen their practice in order to meet the academic needs of all their students consistently.

- Seven small learning community coordinators and coaches, provide professional development to teachers. However, as of yet, the school does not have an effective system to manage the staff development based on data collected from teacher observations, grade level and subject data as well as student assessment data. This information does not inform the professional development decisions of school leaders thus hindering teachers' ability to deepen their content knowledge and improve their practice in their specified area of need.
- Create a system to regularly evaluate school level decisions in response to student progress and the expectations of the Common Core Standards. (5.1)
 - Assessment data confirmed that many students are not making academic progress and that second language learners need additional literacy support to develop and acquire language skills. As of yet, the school does not have a structure in place to regularly evaluate whether or not the school's curriculum has increased academic performance in response to the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. As a result, the school does not know whether instructional and/or organizational decisions made have yielded the intended outcomes.
 - Resources are allocated to support teaching and learning. However, there are no systems in place for school leaders to evaluate whether or not the professional development provided is effective in strengthening teacher practice and accelerating student performance. The lack of evaluation hampers school leaders' ability from creating an accurate picture of the precise professional development needs of each teacher in response to student learning needs.
- Develop a system to regularly evaluate teacher assessment policies and analyze non-academic data to ensure appropriate adjustments to instruction and interventions are implemented. (5.2)
 - Structures to evaluate whether assessment practices provide an accurate picture of what the students need to know and what they have learned are not in place. For example, rubrics designed by teachers and teacher teams are Regents aligned rather than aligned to the Common Core Standards. Without true alignment to the standards, teachers are not provided with an accurate picture of what the students are able to do. As a result, the instructional gaps are not accurately identified and effective planning is hindered.
 - Systems are in place to gather performance data. However, school leaders do not have any structures in place to evaluate teachers' assessment practices to ensure school-wide coherence and to accurately determine teacher and student needs. English rubrics are aligned to the Regents rather than the Common Core Learning Standards thus hampering school leaders from effectively and accurately pinpointing student instructional needs and make timely adjustments to interventions.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: DeWitt Clinton High 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