



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

New Dorp High School

High School 440

**465 New Dorp Lane
Staten Island
NY 10306**

Principal: Deirdre A. DeAngelis

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Reviewer: Cheryl Baker

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

New Dorp High School serves 2367 students in grades nine through twelve. The student population is approximately 52% White, 20% Hispanic, 18% Black, 7% Asian and 3% other groups. Special education students are 9% of the population and 5% of students are English language learners. Student attendance averaged 85% for the period reported in the 2004-2005 Annual School Report, close to that of similar schools and above the City-wide average, although it is below the City target of 90%. New Dorp High School is a year one Title I school.

New Dorp High School is currently in receipt of a Bill and Melinda Gates Smaller Learning Communities grant and is a demonstration site for the Federal Smaller Learning Communities grants. After eight months of planning, New Dorp opened its doors in September 2006 as a zoned high school containing eight theme-based small learning communities of no more than 350 students. This redesign has been aided by New Visions, Inc. through training in data analysis and program design.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school structures the learning environment to provide small learning communities that organize instruction around career-based themes.
- It provides strong focused leadership for innovation in support of improved student achievement.
- The principal engenders collaborative problem-solving and empowers teachers to share in the leadership and decision-making in the school.
- There is a friendly, supportive school culture in which students, teachers and parents feel respected and valued as individuals.
- There are high expectations for teachers regarding the quality of instruction.
- The school encourages and supports data-based action research to deepen understanding of students specific learning needs.
- Attendance issues are addressed proactively and creatively.
- Specialized programs and interventions are provided to address the broad spectrum of students' learning needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to provide training in the analysis and use of data to understand students' learning needs and plan instruction.
- Provide training in techniques for the differentiation of instruction.
- Increase the practice of utilizing frequent common assessments in all disciplines.
- Develop interim goals for school plans so that progress towards their achievement can more easily be measured.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

The school is led by a strong collaborative principal who engenders the support of the whole school community. The school's evolution from one large high school to eight small schools has empowered many teachers to actively engage in leadership roles. It has significantly supported the capacity of each small learning community to know its students and their individual learning needs. The school is moving deliberately to engage teachers in the deeper analysis of data as a means of targeting instruction and raising student achievement across the school.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school uses scholarship data, Regents data, attendance and cutting data, individual student achievement data, and data generated by studies of target groups and management plan implementations to understand what each student knows and is able to do. Cohort data informs progress by grade level and the marks report, with analysis of student's report card grades, helps administrators to accurately monitor progress by classroom.

Data regarding the progress of special education students and English language learners is generated, updated and monitored according to students' individualized plans as required by statute. The school has utilized the data analysis training provided through the redesign process to focus on the analysis of the performance of racial, ethnic and gender sub-groups in disciplines where some students' scores on standardized tests were lower than their counterparts over several years. Groups of teachers have taken responsibility for tracking the progress of these target groups and developing interventions to address their deficits. Other categories of interest, such as students who are over-age relative to their earned credits or freshmen who are over-age and below level, are identified by guidance personnel in each small learning community and their progress is supported and monitored within the community.

The school's practice of reflecting on its own past progress, comparison of its progress with other Staten Island high schools and an identified similar school in another borough led to the decision, in 2004, to pursue mechanisms to support the redesign of the school into smaller communities of learning to better address students' needs and to increase student achievement. Progress in academic subject areas is tightly tracked by designated assistant principals and comparisons of student achievement by discipline are routine. Newly reconfigured learning communities also track academic and attendance data and chart comparisons of students within the community and as compared to other communities.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The goals and actions represented in the Comprehensive Education Plan, the principal’s performance review and the change management plans all place an appropriate emphasis on improving student achievement and they drive the activity of all members of the school community.

Underpinning these school-wide goals are plans for raising the achievement of racial, ethnic and gender sub-groups identified through the action research projects undertaken by the school’s redesign team representing thirty administrators and teachers. Additionally, small learning communities analyze student achievement and attendance data to develop academic and other interventions designed to meet the specific needs of the community’s at-risk students. The structure of each learning community includes a dedicated guidance counselor, attendance aide and common planning time to support the work of designing and monitoring the progress of individualized support plans as part of the delivery of academic intervention services.

Teachers express expectations for student performance through class contracts describing grading, participation and attendance policies. These contracts are signed by parents or caregivers. Warning notices and progress reports are distributed twice per semester. Parents describe several communication vehicles that keep them well informed about their child’s program and progress as well as activities of interest at the school. Student participation on the scholastic achievement tests, below that of similar schools and schools across the City as indicated by the 2004-2005 Annual School Report, is increasing and the school encourages students to prepare for post-secondary education. The school offers six Advanced Placement courses and plans to add two more in the 2007-2008 school year.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school’s curriculum in the core tested areas is aligned with the relevant State and City standards and pacing calendars. Adjustments in content delivery have been made to address deficits in student achievement. Common assessments are administered in science and social studies to monitor students’ incremental progress. Common final examinations in mathematics help to ensure horizontal alignment. Assistant principals are responsible for evaluating teachers in their content areas and monitoring their delivery of the curriculum. They and the principal hold teachers responsible for improving student achievement. If this support does not produce improved instruction they take appropriate action to remove teachers with deficient skills. While classes, except for Advanced Placement courses, are heterogeneously grouped, differentiation of instruction based on identified student needs is not apparent in the majority of classes. Most instruction is teacher- rather than student-centered with too much reliance on lecture and demonstration. As a result, not all students are actively engaged in learning.

Decisions regarding the budget, staffing and scheduling are based on needs revealed by student data. The decision to redesign the school, impacting on all aspects of funding and governance, arose from the longitudinal and comparative analysis of student performance across the school in all tested areas. Student requests for programs and courses influence section numbers and staffing needs. Needs for remediation in reading resulted in the support of low class sizes, the extension of time-on-task, and the addition of specialized programs such as Wilson and RAMP-UP. The principal is dedicated to providing the personnel, materials and opportunities that students need to achieve at higher levels.

Students report a strong sense of belonging, especially as a result of the institution of small learning communities. They feel known and respected by teachers and especially by the principal. They credit the principal for improving their school and appreciate the attention she pays to their athletic and extracurricular pursuits. The principal meets weekly with student leaders who report that students feel that they have a voice in the running of their school.

Attendance, averaging between 85% and 89% overall, is an improvement priority for the school. A highly organized, dedicated and creative attendance teacher is supported by attendance aides in each community, weekly attendance meetings and ample outreach personnel. The school's grade nine attendance for the first four months of the school's configuration into small learning communities measured three percentage points higher than in previous years, an early indicator of progress in meeting the attendance target of the City.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The principal is highly respected by administrators and teachers and has led substantial change in an effort to improve student achievement. She has demonstrated the capacity to effect change through focused collaborative leadership and is committed to supporting the evolution and refinement of small learning communities. The school is well organized and functions smoothly. The principal selects staff in consultation with assistant principals based upon candidates' enthusiasm, response to interview questions, recommendations, and content preparedness. Their commitment and capacity to use data is emerging as a category of interest in hiring.

The principal and assistant principals observe classroom teaching with regularity and often make suggestions for instructional adjustments. Teachers do not routinely observe each others' classrooms to support instructional improvement. However, they support each other through topics which are addressed during common planning time. School-wide decision-making takes place in teams. The decisions are evaluated for their effectiveness, especially as they relate to aspects of the school's redesign and the action research embedded in the redesign process.

Professional development has been largely related to components of the redesign of the school into small learning communities. Teachers have been given the opportunity to take part in courses and workshops such as the scaffold apprenticeship model that focused on the analysis of achievement data to improve instruction, and other newly initiated programs. Instructional technology and content-related training has been provided by

assistant principals. The school has begun to address the need for training in techniques for the differentiation of instruction based on the identification of students' learning needs.

To further support student achievement, the school partners with agencies such as Liberty Partners, the National Football League, the National Basketball League, and local colleges and cultural institutions. These groups offer a variety of tutoring and enrichment opportunities for students at New Dorp resulting in greater student interest in academic success.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school leadership team creates the Comprehensive Education Plan in accordance with the guidelines and, while it does contain all of the requisite components and percentage gain targets, the plan focuses on annual rather than short-term goals. The principal's performance review addresses three goals that set the direction for increasing student achievement in the 2006-2007 school year and contain incremental measures of gains every three months. Each of these goals is supported by a change management plan containing specific actions, timelines and measures of success. They have the capacity to reveal progress towards the intended goals. The plans are evaluated regularly, with discussions about progress towards implementation. Therefore some, but not all, plans in the school contain interim and final outcomes that drive successive phases of goal-setting, improvement planning, and the realignment of practices and resources.

Comparisons of student progress across classrooms and small learning communities is emerging as a practice in the school as a means of making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions. On an annual basis, the school engages in detailed comparisons of its progress relative to neighboring and similar high schools. Significantly, this practice led to the creation of the small learning communities.

Curriculum pacing guides include interim goals and indicators of progress. For students with individual education plans, English language learner services or academic interventions, regular measures of progress lead to the modification of programs and practices. Students receiving specialized programming to address their deficits in English language arts are monitored through diagnostic measures embedded in the particular program they are receiving. The progress of students in science and social studies curricula is measured through the use of common course assessments administered frequently enough to give teachers and assistant principals a clear understanding of the effectiveness of instruction as demonstrated by student achievement. Similar regularity of the uniform assessment of content knowledge in all disciplines remains a goal.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: New Dorp High School (HS 440)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score			X

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, 			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 			X
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* 			X
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			X
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X