



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Intermediate School 392

Middle School 392

**104 Sutter Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11212**

Principal: Shirley Wheeler

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Lead Reviewer: Cheryl Baker

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Intermediate School 392 (IS 392) is an middle school with 293 students from grade 5 through grade 8. The school population comprises 83% Black, 12% Hispanic, 2% American Indian and 2% Asian students. The student body includes no English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 38% of the students enrolled and girls account for 62%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 95.7%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 86% eligibility.

The school shares a campus with an elementary school. It focuses strongly on the arts and high achieving students. It was founded in 2002 by the formal principal and her administrative team.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Administrators provide clear, informed, effective and inclusive leadership that engenders good levels of collaboration among staff.
- The school has created effective structures and mechanisms for the collection, analysis and use of student achievement data.
- The school is well organized and procedures are effective in creating a positive environment that celebrates learning.
- The curriculum provides the appropriate challenge for students, incorporates the visual and performing arts and is increasingly interdisciplinary.
- Frequent monitoring of instruction by administrators and among teachers serves to reinforce the implementation of effective teaching strategies.
- Parents are afforded informative programs that assist them in helping their children learn.
- The school has partnerships with many community organizations that support the academic, social and emotional needs of students and their families.
- Students and teachers benefit from flexible scheduling that supports extended instructional time, special projects and presentations, and professional development.
- Administrators and teachers practice routine and fluid evaluation of interventions, programs and practices resulting in necessary adjustments.

What the school needs to improve

- Engage all stakeholders in creating a strategic plan for the school's overall improvement that incorporates already effective grade level planning.
- Communicate the goals in this plan to teachers, parents, students and the community at large to garner continued and widespread support for the school and its needs.
- Extend professional development to broaden instructional techniques for the differentiation of instruction based on the identification of student's discrete learning needs.
- Continue to devise mechanisms to enlist greater parent input to teachers and others regarding the educational and personal needs and strengths of their children.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The school has made good progress in improving student achievement since opening its doors in 2002. Student achievement is among the best in the City and the school has received recognition for closing the achievement gap. Teachers and administrators are highly focused on gathering and using all manner of data to understand what their students learning needs are. Well-defined systems and adequate training support teachers in accessing the most recent information regarding students' progress, to good effect. Curricular, instructional, grade level and lesson planning are informed by student achievement data, as are plans for professional development and student interventions. Yet these plans and the currently abbreviated Comprehensive Education Plan are not supplemented with a strategic plan to guide its overall development.

The curricular and extracurricular programs are broad and engaging. The school facility is new and supports exploration in the arts. Teachers are well supported in developing their skills. Good focused professional development and strong collaboration among staff respond to needs revealed by student achievement. Lessons provide interest and challenge but are not always differentiated. Students feel fortunate to attend their school and enjoy good relations among themselves and with their teachers and administrators. Parents, as well, are pleased that they chose the school for their children. The school has made progress on most of the suggestions from the previous Quality Review, most notably in developing its effective common practices for gathering and analyzing student achievement data. The data team, formed to address the work of the required inquiry team, has taken hold and expanded its investigative practices to encompass the entire school. Members are highly engaged in data gathering and analysis and are identifying professional development needs as they analyze periodic assessment data more deeply.

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 the student's progress over time.

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

The school has established effective management systems and structures that support the analysis and use of data by teachers and administrators. Teachers have received training in the use of on-line assessment results and use this effectively to update records of student progress. This information is analyzed at the administrative level as one aspect

of a broad array of data used to inform constantly updated understanding of the progress of students, classrooms and grade levels. Statistical and anecdotal data are used equally well by administrators and staff. The few special education students are integrated into the general population as appropriate and specialists monitor their progress according to the stipulations of their individual education plans. They have shown good progress as measured by the State alternate assessments designed for students with significant challenges. There are no English language learners at the school.

The school's population is nearly two-thirds female and the school is diligent in monitoring the academic and social progress of boys and girls and the school has identified good intervention programs to address minor disparities. The progress of the school's ethnic groups is monitored in the context of the school as a whole and does not reveal dramatic disparities. Subgroups have progressed well and, recently, the school received national recognition for closing the achievement gap, just one of two New York State schools to be so designated. As a school that specializes in educating high achieving students, the progress of those students is a routine focus of teachers and administrators, especially through early Regents success for 8th grade students. The progress of the school over time and against similar schools is a source of great interest for the school, especially as it has succeeded in annual improvements during its brief history. Administrators are quick to adopt approaches that are effective in other schools with similar populations as they constantly endeavor to improve the education of every one of their students, all of whom they know well.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has developed good effective and consistent practices for gathering, organizing, analyzing and using data to plan for students, classrooms, grade levels and content areas. Results of standardized and periodic assessments influence planning and goal setting for instruction and interventions, as do running records and conferring notes. For students identified as a focus area, or who are in greatest need of improvement, the school has a number of small group interventions that take place during, before and after school which are positively impacting learning. Students' progress resulting from these special measures is assessed every six weeks and they are regrouped accordingly. Specialized programs such as Wilson Reading are used to instruct and measure the progress of special education students. Collectively, these plans and interventions have served students well, as their academic success continues at high levels.

The school has overall goals for its improvements, some of which are academic while others describe needs that require fiscal support. While these goals and needs are generally understood, the lack of a concrete, strategic plan for overall continued improvement limits the school's capacity to communicate its success, as well as its goals and needs, to the community at large and thereby increase support for the school and its needs.

Students and parents are aware that the school holds appropriate high expectations for academic achievement and students have strong ambitions and goals for their achievement. The school demands extensive homework which parents are required to

review. Honor rolls recognize high academic achievement. The school provides parents with information about school functions through mailings, notices, email, phone contact and a new on-line communication resource. The school has increased outreach to parents through informative workshops that assist them in supporting their child's learning, and social events, which are increasing participation. Parents receive information about academic progress through conferences, report cards and occasional contact from teachers. Less routine are requests from the school to learn more about student's strengths and needs from parents that might further teachers' capacity to impact learning.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

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

The school's curriculum is well aligned across classrooms and grade levels. Teachers use the balanced literacy approach to teaching English language arts and they are increasing their practice of gathering information on student progress through conferring. The math and other curricula provide incremental measures of student understanding that help guide instructional decisions. Teachers receive good assistance from administrators, who have clear expectations for lesson development and high quality instruction. The school facility supports a rich array of opportunities in the arts and students enjoy lessons in the visual arts and drama that are a strong component of their educational experience. Extracurricular activities, field trips and projects add breadth and depth to learning. Evidence of exemplary student work adorns the halls and classrooms. Lessons are interesting and engaging and most provide time for students to work in groups or independently. While some differentiation of activity occurs among groups, students mostly move along at the same pace. Differentiation based on individual student's discrete learning needs is not yet a common feature of instruction. School leaders are adept at making strategic decisions about the schedule, staffing and expenditures to meet the needs of the school. For instance, the school has agreed on a creative use of flexible scheduling and shared responsibilities for providing interventions that provides students with extra instruction in areas of need and accommodates sufficient professional development time for teachers, both of which have a positive impact on learning. Unanticipated additional funds supported necessary science, reading, guidance and drama personnel thus expanding the curriculum and the school's support staff. Children like their school and their teachers. Many travel long distances to come to the school and make good friends. One student, due to graduate in June, suggested that the school could be improved by, "Making it 9 to 12!" The school's attendance policies and procedures are well defined and monitored. Good attendance is rewarded. As a result, attendance averages, at 96%, are above those of similar and City schools.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

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

The school is well organized and clear procedures are communicated to parents, students and teachers. The tone of the school is calm, warm and studious. The principal and

assistant principal are regular visitors to classrooms and teachers look to them as valuable instructional resources. They, and the coach, provide helpful feedback on lessons. They use observation data and teacher input to plan professional development. The school's professional development program is well organized. It is supported by the creation of time necessary to efficiently support teachers. Intervisitations, demonstration lessons, team teaching, coaching and participation in regional workshops are some of the features of the professional development program. Teachers meet in grade level teams to analyze student data, share practices and plan lessons. Fellow teachers mentor teachers new to the school or the profession. The school also serves as a mentoring site for new administrators.

The school has good supports for advising and providing additional services for students and their families. Groups for issues such as anger management or family problems help students. Grants and community partnerships supplement the school's capacity to meet the academic and personal needs of students effectively. Corporations, cultural organizations, educational organizations, civic and fraternal groups all provide avenues for student development.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

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

The school has developed consistent and detailed practices for gathering, analyzing and using data to plan at the classroom level. It has developed an abbreviated Comprehensive Education Plan addressing just those areas required by the State. While, collectively, these rich data sources and their implications provide overall direction for the school's improvement, it does not have the guidance of a strategic plan. Teachers and administrators meet in grade level or other intervention teams to effectively adjust instructional plans and interventions at six-week intervals. Administrators set goals with teachers that efficiently guide their personal development based on observation and student achievement. At the class level, teachers also use information from numerous data sources to make rapid adjustments to instruction. For example, when students' work evidenced a lack of clarity regarding the concept of parallel slope, the teacher re-taught the lesson and students explained their mathematical reasoning to their peers. The school's data team is, increasingly, the hub of decision making at the school. Results of periodic and diagnostic assessments for all students are being used well to monitor student achievement and adjust instruction and interventions of English language arts and math. As well, the team is identifying needs for professional development revealed by the data and is collaborating to provide even more support of teachers. This school-wide approach to fluid adjustment of plans based on measured outcomes helps to support continuous growth, which is the aim of the school. The school has made good progress since its founding and leaders have identified its goals and needs. The school community's capacity to share and champion the vision the principal is hampered, somewhat, by the lack of a well-articulated strategic plan to guide future improvements.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Intermediate School 392	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners? (not scored as there are no English language learners in the school)				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?				X	
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?			X		
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X		

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X	

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X	