

Quality Review FAQ

Pre-visit

Question 1: *Can a Superintendent or SATIF meet with the school leadership before the review?*

Response: The Superintendent or SATIF can meet with the school as long as the purpose is not QR “preparation” but clarification and/or part of on-going school improvement support. Consequently, these meetings should be scheduled and planned in collaboration with the school’s network team.

Question 2: *Can Reviewers take different approaches to the first contact phone call/email with Principal?*

Response: As in the past all Reviewers should contact the Principal 5-7 days before the review. As long as the same essential information is discussed and requested during the first contact communication (see Appendix A at end of this document for expectations), it makes sense that there will be some variability; following first contact, Reviewers can continue to connect with the Principal through email or phone calls – what works best for them.

Question 3: *What is the expectation for schools submitting the SSEF so that Reviewers have enough time to digest it before contacting the Principal?*

Response: The SSEF is to be submitted by Principals to qualityreview@schools.nyc.gov 10 days before the review date so that Reviewers can read and analyze it in light of other data and contact the Principal 5-7 days before the review.

Question 4: *What if the school does not submit its SSEF 10 days before the review?*

Response: If the Reviewer has not received the SSEF 7 days before the review, the Quality Review team will work with DSS and the Cluster to get it as soon as possible.

Question 5: *What if the Reviewer does not contact the Principal 5-7 days before the review?*

Response: If the school has not heard from the Reviewer 5-7 days before the visit the QR team should be notified at the above email, cc’ing the Network Leader. The Reviewer will be contacted immediately.

Question 6: *Will Reviewers have access to the school's ARIS data?*

Response: Reviewers will have access to your school's data in My Students and Reports. Reviewers will not have access to any of your school's private communities in Connect, unless you provide them access.

Question 7: *Does the length of the Quality Review still vary by size or type of school?*

Response: Yes:

- Schools 1,499 students and below: 2 days
- Schools 1,500 students and above: 2.5 days
- All D75 schools: 2.5 days

New school: 1 day (no size designated); to be conducted by Cluster/Network, and the report not to be published though shared with DPA.

Question 8: *Will Reviewers potentially review schools they have reviewed before?*

Response: It is possible due to legal and logistical constraints and school performance habits. Efforts are being made to minimize these occurrences.

Classroom Visits

Question 9: *Is there flexibility in the number of classroom visits*

Response: The Reviewer and Principal should schedule 7-10 classroom visits. If, during the review, there is reason to visit 1-3 more classes for the purpose of collecting evidence, and both the Principal and Reviewer agree, this can be negotiated.

Question 10: *How are classes selected?*

Response: Reviewers will select a range of classes (perhaps up to 20) to be visited based on school goals and data analyzed before the review (in the SSEF, the CEP demographics, student outcome data available in ARIS and the Data Set, etc). On the first day of the review the selection of the 7-10 classes to be visited will be discussed and settled with the Principal, given on-the-ground constraints. Generally the final selection of classes should include a variety of subjects, a range of grades and multiple categories, i.e. General education, ESL, special education, etc. Additionally, the Reviewer will work to ensure that a range of teacher experience is observed (that is, a diversity of novice and experienced teachers).

Question 11: *Why is there an option that Reviewers will spend time meeting with teachers before visiting their classrooms? And how is this done?*

Response: The purpose of the Reviewer speaking briefly with teachers before visiting their classrooms is to learn the context of the classrooms, the intentions for the lessons, and how well students' needs are known. And to record these as pieces of evidence. How this is done can be worked out with the Principal on the first day. If checking-in with all visited teachers is not possible, it is incumbent on the Reviewer to document the context of and intentions for the lesson through other sources (Principal, coach, written lesson plan, etc.).

Two guiding prompts for the exchange between Reviewer and Teacher:

- What should I expect to see today?
- You have Student X in your class: How is your teaching/use of resources supporting his/her learning needs and next steps?

Teacher Team Meetings

Question 12: *What if the UFT Chapter Chair is not in the teacher meetings?*

Response: Same as last year the UFT Chapter Chair has a right to meet briefly with the Reviewer. This is a time for the UFT Chapter Chair to share what he or she would like to have said, as evidence, for the record about the quality of the systems and coherence of the school. The Reviewer does not have a special set of questions for the Chapter Chair.

Question 13: *How do the teacher teams meetings work? What if teacher teams are not meeting normally during the review?*

Response: The focus of the two teacher team meetings is: *the work of teachers engaged in collaborative inquiry*. The teams are selected by the Reviewer in discussion with the Principal; the teams should represent specific expertise and/or strategic areas of work for the school: e.g., discipline/subject areas developing curricula, grade levels relevant to goals, intervention team.

Contingent upon the school's in-house calendar the Reviewer will opt for one of the following choices in order to minimally disrupt student learning:

- A. In the case that teacher teams are typically meeting during the site visit, the Reviewer will observe each teacher team engage in a collaborative inquiry process and ask questions as needed. Time can be allotted at the end of this meeting for questions and responses as well. (See sample questions below.)
- B. In the case that teacher team meetings are not slated to occur, as per the school's internal calendar, the Reviewer and Principal can schedule a large group teacher meeting, or two smaller teacher group meetings, or one of each (there are 2 hours total suggested to meet with teachers). The purpose will remain capturing evidence regarding the effectiveness of teacher team engaged in collaborative inquiry at the site (again, see questions below).

The following questions are appropriate for the teacher team meetings:

1. What is the focus on your team's work at present? What goals does the team have?
2. How does your present focus connect with past work of the team, and/or other teams?
3. What group of students has the team targeted/focused on? Why/how was this group chosen? How are you accountable to/for them?
4. How does the team analyze data and student work to adjust instructional practice for student success? To track student progress?
5. Describe a new/different strategy that has been implemented to push student progress as a result of the team's work. Why was it chosen? Did it work? How do you know?
6. What types of "teacher work" (e.g., assignments, curriculum, assessments, intervisitation feedback, low-inference observations) has been shared?
7. Describe the impact the sharing of teacher work has had on your practice? The team? The larger school?
8. What types of autonomy and/or decision-making power does this team have?
9. How are team leaders chosen and supported? What training in facilitation have they been provided or protocols have they been taught to use?

10. What professional development opportunities and resources (coaches, books, etc.) support the team's work?

Parent Meeting

Question 14: *Can the Parent Coordinator participate in the Parent Meeting?*

Response: The Parent Coordinator (PC) should not expect to participate in the Parent Meeting. If the PC is needed for translation or the parents request the presence of the PC, the PC can join the meeting as support; the focus of the dialogue will remain between Reviewer and parents.

Small Group: Student Work Meeting

Question 15: *How are students selected for the small group work meeting? What's the focus?*

Response: In order to capture the impact of the work that the Inquiry Team has on raising student achievement, the Reviewer and Principal should agree on a selected time slot to view two small group meetings.

Feedback Protocols with School Leadership

Question 16: *Are the protocols changing for End of Day 1 or Final Feedback Meeting?*

Response: There are protocols for both of these meetings. See Appendix B and C below.

Scoring the School and Writing the Report:

Question 17: *Can Reviewers contact the school after the visit?*

Response: Yes, for clarifying questions.

SEE BELOW FOR APPENDICES ON:

- A. Expectations for First Contact with School**
- B. Protocol for End of Day 1 Debrief**
- C. Protocol for Final Feedback Meeting**
- D. Categories of Reviewers**

Appendix A. First Contact with Principal (Approx. 30 min exchange)

The Reviewer has the option of contacting the Principal either through email or telephone. See below for a sample email correspondence. The following should be in some way be covered during first and follow up contact.

1. Reviewer introduces self, providing the Principal with a brief summary of pedagogical/Reviewer experience.
 2. Reviewer asks a few clarifying questions regarding the content of the school's SSEF; Reviewer can request additional information such as org chart and class/prep schedule.
 3. Reviewer and Principal establish site visit schedule (not inclusive of selection of specific classes or students, etc.), and Principal commits to emailing Reviewer a final version of the schedule and prep schedule.
 4. Reviewer answers Principal's questions regarding process and protocols, and refers the Principal to the QR Principal's Guide.
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Dear Principal Z,

I am conducting your Quality Review, which starts on Wednesday, October 20, 2010, and I am very much looking forward to being with you for the 2 days of the Review.

I will arrive between 8:30 and 9:00 am on Wednesday ready for a 9:00 am start, and I will be in the school until 4:00 pm. On Thursday, I will be in the school from 8:00 am until 3:30 pm.

The feedback on Wednesday will take place at about 2:15 pm, and I will need one hour for preparation before the feedback.

If you would like to develop a schedule in preparation for the review, please forward it to me as soon as possible. The schedule should include-

- *A meeting with you, for about 2 hours*
- *Two teacher team meetings up to 1 hr each*
- *A meeting with 8 to 10 students for approximately 30 minutes*
- *A meeting with approximately 4 students for about 20 minutes to review their best work (It will help if you schedule this meeting immediately after the larger students' meeting)*
- *A meeting with 5 to 10 parents, including your PA President and at least one other SLT parent, for 30 to 45 minutes*
- *Opportunities to speak for about ten minutes with the individual teachers to be visited (prior to classroom visits)*
- *7-10 Class visits for 20 minutes per visit (Please arrange in three separate sessions)*
- *The remainder of the time will be for further discussions with yourself and others to cover all aspects of the review criteria.*

In addition to the proposed schedule, please email me an organization chart and prep/class schedule for your site.

I will be telephoning you Thursday afternoon to discuss the review with you and answer any questions that you may have regarding the process. I look forward to working with you.

Reviewer X

Appendix B. End of Day 1: Debrief Protocol (30-45min)

The Reviewer, Principal, and 2-3 key cabinet/leadership members can be present at this meeting. It can remain between Reviewer and Principal at the discretion of the Principal. It is helpful if this group is defined by the Principal and communicated to the Reviewer prior to the start of the review. No matter the number of participants, the dialogue is meant to be primarily between the Principal and the Reviewer. Reviewer begins by providing a brief summary of the 4-step protocol used for this debrief. (~5min)

Step 1. Reviewer shares with school leadership what she/he heard and saw during the day: the specific low-inference data statements of both strengths and areas for improvement. *Today I saw/heard...* (~7-10min)

Step 2. School leadership asks clarifying questions and/or responds by confirming data statements and/or offering additional data/information. *Note:* The Reviewer may need to ask the school leadership to remain “low on the ladder of inference”, which means keeping the discussion and comments based on evidence as much as possible before making interpretations of what was seen and heard during the day. (~7-10min)

Step 3. Reviewer responds with an evaluative synthesis, based on low-inference statements and the school leadership’s responses and comments. The synthesis leads to a description of areas in which more evidence is needed. *Note:* While Quality Statements can be referred to here, no preliminary judgment will be offered overall as there may not be enough evidence from one day. However, an implicit evaluation of the school’s development may be embedded in the request for more data needed in certain areas of the review (e.g., “I need to see more evidence of consistency of teacher team use of data to set goals.”) (~7-10min)

Step 4. Reviewer and school leadership discuss the evaluative synthesis to prepare for Day 2 of the site visit and revise schedule as needed, e.g. School leadership to select classes that showcase specific Reviewer requests. (~7-10min)

Appendix C. End of Day 2: Final Feedback Meeting (45min)

The Reviewer, Principal, Network Leader (or other network team representative), and 2-3 other key cabinet/leadership members can be present at this meeting. The meeting can remain between just the Reviewer, Principal, and Network Leader at the discretion of the Principal. *Note:* If the Reviewer and/or Principal suspect the Final Feedback Meeting will be a difficult conversation, it is suggested that the Reviewer, Principal, and Network Leader gather briefly before the Final Feedback Meeting to discuss keeping the meeting between just the three of them.

The Reviewer, as facilitator of this meeting, begins the session by thanking the community and leadership and gaining agreement on the norms for this exchange: (~5min)

- Respectful dialogue
- Focus on evidence and avoid assumptions
- Build collaborative understanding
- Avoid aggressive or defensive language

Then the Reviewer describes the feedback protocol. Please note that there will be no written script to read aloud. (~5min)

Step 1. Reviewer reads the bullets listed on the Summary Feedback Sheet and provides the QR overall score (not scores for individual Quality Statements or indicators). (~10 min)

Step 2. Principal responds to the bullets and overall score. (~10 min)

Step 3. Reviewer invites Network Leader (or representative) and other participants to offer evidence they believe not taken into consideration in the provisional score; the Reviewer states that (a) the expectation is that the current evaluation will stand, and (b) all feedback will be documented in the record book for quality assurance purposes. (~10 min)

Step 4. Reviewer ends this portion of the meeting, potentially with commentary regarding school and network feedback, and then departs. (~5 min)

Step 5. Principal, Network Leader and other school community members can discuss messaging and next steps for the extended school community.

Appendix D. Categories of Quality Reviewers

Typically a school is reviewed by one person (a *Lead Reviewer*) in our current model due to personnel and budgetary limitations. There have been many requests to our team from school leaders, reviewers, and school support staff to expand the number of reviewers to include a team that visits a school so that judgments are less susceptible to an individual's subjective perceptions. There are four (4) reasons for why a school may experience a review with more than one person; they are described below; in each case the additional person serves the purpose of building capacity for more and better qualified reviewers.

1. **Shadow Reviewer:** A shadow is either a reviewer-in-training or a member of a central DOE team or network support staff learning about the quality review process. The shadow reviewer is not affiliated with the school, plays no role during the review other than observation, and has no impact on the review scores. The Lead Reviewer assumes all reviewing responsibilities and is expected to execute every aspect of the review.
2. **Mentor Reviewer:** After shadowing a veteran reviewer, a reviewer-in-training must experience at least one review (perhaps two or three) during which s/he is the Lead Reviewer but plans and executes the review with the support of a veteran reviewer – different from the shadowed reviewer. Typically the mentor is one of the Directors for School Quality or another reviewer with deep familiarity with the process as well as positive feedback with regard to how s/he plans and conducts a review. The mentor may at times interject in questioning and meetings with staff, parents, and students, and typically will collaborate with the Lead Reviewer on the crafting of provisional scores and feedback to the school. If we are to build capacity for new reviewers to sustain high expectations and effectively adhere to QR protocols, then these actions are sometimes necessary.
3. **Field Visit Reviewer:** Since January 2010, as an additional layer to our quality control and capacity-building processes, Directors for School Quality are being paired with reviewers who have already been trained, and are appearing for some portion of a review. The purpose of this visit is to observe the Lead Reviewer and offer feedback on his/her practice, thinking, implementation of protocols, use of the rubric, etc. During this process it is less likely than during mentoring that the IFS Reviewer will interject during meetings, but it is possible – with the goal of maintaining the integrity and expectations of the QR process. However, it is common for the IFS Reviewer to act as a thought-partner with the Lead Reviewer, and therefore may impact the scores and feedback the school receives. In-Field Support is also occurring through personalized check-ins and phone calls between reviewers and Directors, with the same goal.
4. **Associate Reviewer:** The Associate Reviewer has an area of expertise that aligns with the school and/or a learning need of our Reviewer corps; they are experienced educators with QR training and join the Lead Reviewer for the duration of a review. The Associate Reviewers are not school-based staff and do not have any organizational ties to the schools they review. Associate Reviewers do not take a lead at any point during

the review, and therefore do not interject with questions or facilitate meetings. Given the expertise of the Associate Reviewer, however, the Lead Reviewer and Associate Reviewer discuss and analyze the evidence when they have time together.