



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public School 004

**530 Stanley Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: Eleanor Greenberg

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Reviewer: David Tobin

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 4K is a special education cluster school located in the Brooklyn district of New York. The school extends across five school sites and provides education for students with many disabilities from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. Approximately 309 students are enrolled and students are placed in one of 39 classes. Nearly 70% of students are Black, approximately 22% are Hispanic and 8 % are White or Asian. There are 14 students who are classified as English language learners, 8 of whom receive support from English as a second language services. There is a significant gender difference in that boys outnumber girls in the ration of 3 to1. Teachers work closely with a wide range of other professionals in the school setting.

Three instructional teams have been created to align appropriate learning opportunities for students with different disabilities.

An autism team, led by an assistant principal, provides an 8:1:2 pre-kindergarten program for students with autism and pervasive developmental disorders. A 6:1:1 program is offered for older students who have reached the age of five years. There are two further classes where a 12:1:4 program is offered.

The alternate assessment team, led by an assistant principal, has devised a functional academic program for students who are cognitively challenged and exhibit behavior disorders. These students are taught within 12:1:1 and 8:1:1 classes where there is an emphasis on language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, personal health and vocational skills.

The standardized instructional team, again with an assistant principal leading the program, offers instruction to two groups of students: those with emotional and behavioral difficulties and those with a hearing impairment. These students are taught in 12:1:1 and 8:1:1 classes. There is one inclusion class.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The collaborative practices of the three assistant principals bring a vital structure and coherence to the school's organizational and instructional programs.
- Teachers, paraprofessionals, and other professionals work effectively as team members and are committed to the school's continued progress.
- Resources, within and outside of the classroom, are evaluated against the criteria of their fitness for purpose and their potential to accelerate students' learning.
- Students' progress and achievements are captured using a wide range of recording methods.
- The efforts of the principal and staff to develop and maintain effective channels of communication with parents have created a climate of mutual respect.
- The school makes highly effective use of formative assessment schedules in order to set challenging but realistic targets for students.
- The school's positive behavior management policy is exemplary and staff members continue to find imaginative ways of acknowledging the students' appropriate behaviors in a wide range of settings.
- The school's horticultural base, not only provides students with valuable educational, work, recreational and leisure opportunities, it also promotes important links with residents in the local community.

What the school needs to improve

- Build the capacity of teachers to analyze and use data to align instruction to meet the diverse needs of students.
- Evaluate the degree to which the facilities and resources available in the school help to accelerate the student's learning.
- Consider how best to evaluate the impact of in-house study groups, turn-key and class visitations on students' accelerated learning.
- Ensure that data collection enables the school to capture evidence of successes particularly in relation to the school's effective behavior management practices.
- Evaluate the impact that the high staff turnover has on the school's capacity to achieve continuity in the delivery of its instructional programs.
- Consider how best a parent representative might support the parents of a student new to the school and how parents' concerns and anxieties for the continuing education of their children might be addressed.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with some well-developed features.

Public School 4K has risen successfully to many challenges. Program coherence and consistency in management practices have had to be addressed as staff and students are dispersed across five Brooklyn sites. For reasons beyond its control, the school has to train new teachers continuously, making it difficult to build depth into instructional programs. Accommodation at one site is cramped and offers limited space for music, physical education, staff/parent meetings and for the storage of resources. The principal has remained resolute and committed to overcoming these obstacles to students' learning.

The principal's decision to retain strategic responsibility but delegate operational responsibility to the three assistant principals has been effective. The assistant principals share common goals and bring a consistency to the overall functioning of the school. They encourage staff members to develop specific expertise that is relevant to working in one of the three instructional teams. A carefully conceived and differentiated professional development program takes account of the needs of new and experienced members of staff. At PS 843, while the classrooms are compact, the proximity of teachers and paraprofessionals actively encourages team work, collaborative planning and learning from each other.

The school continues to streamline its assessment, recording and reporting arrangements. Judicious use is made of both summative and formative assessment. Teachers draft relevant targets for students that are informed by their individual educational plans. Students' progress is recorded using a wide range of schedules such as running records, development profiles, teacher observations, portfolios of students' work and video/photographic evidence. Teachers and other professionals have established a good rapport with students and have aligned the curriculum to students' needs. The school's relationships with parents are good. Parents speak highly of the school and are well represented within the school leadership team.

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 proficient

The school begins the process of gathering data by reviewing the data contained within each student's individual education plan. Invariably, meetings are held with parents and caregivers, and further multi-disciplinary observation and assessment undertaken to provide the school with a comprehensive baseline measure of the level of a student's cognitive and behavioral functioning. The database is extensive and includes the views of parents, comments from home visits, school observations, social work reports, and the professional opinions of a social worker, a psychologist, and therapists.

Teachers are adept at choosing assessment tools that reflect the nature and complexity of a student's disability. Thus, for students with autism, teachers make use of data obtained from inventories of early development and checklists of basic skills. Formative, as opposed to summative, assessment reveals how best to develop and augment a student's communication skills, improve motor skills, and promote a student's social and adaptive behavior skills. In addition, data is gathered from parents, teachers and other professionals through formal and informal assessment, observation and record-keeping to check that skills, once acquired, are generalized to different settings and maintained over time.

Some special education students with disabilities follow the New York State alternate assessment. These students are assessed through portfolios of evidence in place of regular examinations. Accordingly, baseline data is gathered relating to their functional literacy and numeracy skills and knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. Video and photographic evidence of students' progress and achievements is gathered in conjunction with pieces of students' work, teachers' reports and observations. Importantly, data is collected regularly in relation to students' behavior and adjustment.

Data is gathered for a third group of students, supported by the standardized instruction team, in relation to their proficiency in subjects such as English language arts and mathematics. The nature of their disabilities may also include severe emotional and behavioral problems and data such as the school-wide information system tracks progress. Some students with hearing impairments are assessed with regard to signing and the use of radio microphones.

However, not all teachers understand how to interpret State and City test results and data is not analyzed by gender or ethnicity. The school does share, however, its data on a regular basis with other special schools. The assistant principals continue in their mission to ensure consistency in data collection across the schools and build the capacity of teachers to analyze and use data from a range of different sources in order to meet the diverse needs of students.

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 with some well-developed features.

The school staff collaborate closely with parents, paraprofessionals and others to set challenging but realistic goals for students. A priority, in formulating an individual educational program, is to reflect the mandatory requirements contained within a student's individual education plan. Students' case notes, recorded observations and conference notes testify to the teachers' expertise in using the plan as a blueprint to design, implement and evaluate programs of instruction.

In most cases, a student's plan helps teachers, paraprofessionals and therapists to identify a student's next learning steps. In some instances, however, learning targets are not defined with sufficient clarity or precision. Where this occurs, the principal negotiates and clarifies the targets with those who drafted the plan. Intake meetings, to which parents are invited, are purposeful and well organized and the data available is considered by all in agreeing a student's next learning steps. Informal reviews are convened on a regular

basis and a formal annual review is held when amendments to the instructional program are proposed and changes in a student's needs recorded.

Demanding goals set are for the school as a whole, for groups of students and for individuals. Presently, a school-wide framework of behavioral expectations is being tailored to students' developmental and cognitive levels. The intention is to ensure that all adults, including parents, deal with behavior and misbehavior in a consistent fashion. To that end, effective use has been made of The Discipline Code (NYDoE 2006) which provides a comprehensive description of unacceptable behaviors. The school is building on the code to identify a range of appropriate behaviors that will be reinforced using its positive behavior strategy. The assessment and monitoring of students' progress within the alternate assessment program, has recently been targeted for improvement. Monitoring of data collection, derived from EDMARK, a word recognition reading program, provides inconclusive evidence of progress. Further professional development is planned and tighter schedules for benchmarking of data collection introduced.

Parents express unequivocal support for the school and appreciate the close working relationships that have been fostered. Close co-operation between teachers and parents has been achieved. Parents visit school regularly and are kept well informed of the range of school activities via the school's newsletter. Parents are also invited to parent workshops designed to enable teachers and parents to work together to support students in achieving independence and academic and social achievements. Workshops also teach parents how to teach their children to read at home. The parents' major concerns relate to their understanding of the individual educational plan immediately prior to their child joining the school. They also express anxiety about transition to another school at the end of grade 6 and suggested that a parent representative might support other parents facing these concerns.

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 with some well-developed features.

The school matches its instructional activity to the students' needs. Data, derived from multi-disciplinary assessment, provides an accurate view of students' cognitive and behavioral functioning. References to the mandated curriculum, contained within a student's individual educational plan, inform the planning process. The detailed planning of instruction programs is based on data derived from the school's formative assessment schedules. For example, the Brigance diagnostic inventories provide the school with developmental profiles, adapted for each of the three programs of instruction. Students' profiles pinpoint the appropriate starting point of instruction for each student.

Instructional teams are skilled at differentiating materials and resources. The most cognitively challenged students with limited or no expressive language skill are taught to use Mayer Johnson symbols that depict objects or activities in order to make their needs or intentions clear. The system has been incorporated into communication programs across all sites. Students, who have acquired word recognition skills, use leveled reading texts geared to their reading levels. Those that have acquired basic writing skills are taught how to use scaffolding as a technique to extend their writing proficiency further. Drama is used extensively within instruction programs, and techniques such as the 'teacher in role', 'hot seating' and 'still image' promote adaptive behavior. Students' demonstration of

appropriate behavior when traveling by bus is captured on video to be used for the purposes of further professional development.

The school strives continually to improve its programs of instruction. Walk-through sessions have examined the consistency with which data was gathered and analyzed and highlighted the need to enhance further the teachers' capacity to use data in their instruction planning. Teachers are accountable for the progress that students make. Funding is set aside for the establishment and maintenance of a data base; for the purchase of a lap-top computer to develop assessment tools further; and for the continuance of the successful relationship with the Columbia University Teachers' College. Analysis of student data has revealed the need to schedule specific time for instructional teams to set timelines for data to be analyzed, evaluated and recorded. There are marked differences in the quality of accommodation across the sites. In some instances, accommodation is cramped and reduces the instructional opportunities to accelerate students' learning most notably within music and movement activities.

Staff are committed to promoting the school's core values. They relate positively and enthusiastically with students and those with verbal skills are able to identify staff members who they trust. Parents, too, are involved in assisting students to achieve the targets they are working towards. Last year the school exceeded its attendance performance indicator of 87% by 0.6%. Attendance is given a high priority. Data is disaggregated by instructional groups and reveals how bussing, hospitalization/medical factors and changes of home address impact on students' attendance patterns. Telephone outreach is conducted on a daily basis and logs are maintained at each site.

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 proficient with some well-developed features.

The principal's current performance review highlights the difficulties in building depth in terms of teachers' pedagogical knowledge and understanding. This year, more than one in four classroom teachers are new to the school and have less than one year's teaching experience. Furthermore, the principal has identified the scheduling restraints that make it difficult to give paraprofessionals more appropriate training. What is not known, however, is how specifically the high staff turnover is impacting on the school's capacity to achieve continuity in the delivery of its instructional programs. Nevertheless, teachers and paraprofessional are supported in their task of delivering challenging, relevant and stimulating instructional programs for students. The current Comprehensive Educational Plan identifies the commitment of school leaders to developing lead teachers' pedagogical skills in reading, mathematics and disability; to promoting all teachers' understanding of how to analyze and interpret State and City wide data; and to maintaining the close collaboration with Teachers' College in developing appropriate literacy programs. Budgetary decisions earmark funds for teachers to attend workshops and make inter-class visitations.

All staff and parents express unqualified confidence in the leadership of the school and accordingly, morale is high. The principal has an excellent rapport with colleagues, students, and parents. Her energy, enthusiasm and commitment to corporate management have been critical factors in the school's continuing development. While the principal carries out an annual lesson observation with each teacher and provides detailed feedback, she and her senior staff also visit classrooms on a daily basis and enjoy a close

working relationship with classroom teachers, paraprofessionals and significant others. Planning and revision takes place in teams and results in innovative ideas and suggestions being made to streamline the school's performance. For example, helpful lesson planning proforma have been produced, setting out school-wide behavioral expectations and student progress charts developed to capture spontaneous incidents of students using appropriate and adaptive behaviors. The school runs smoothly and efficiently. The school's paradise garden helps to meet the emotional and educational needs of students and has been the recipient of many awards. Students have the opportunity to experience an outdoor, hands-on curriculum. The school has strong links with local community-based organizations including Brooklyn Botanical Gardens, and neighborhood music and arts programs.

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 proficient with some well-developed features.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is an effective tool in promoting school development. Precise measurable targets are specified. Procedures are in place so that evidence of progress is gathered from constituencies, classroom observations and evaluations and data analysis. Collaborative team meetings, interclass visitations and the use of common planning time, help teachers to recognize the part they play in ensuring that the school meets its declared objectives. Appropriately, the principal targets the further devolution of responsibility to teachers for gathering and analyzing data and their enhanced teacher accountability for reviewing evidence based on goal-setting and evidence of students' progress. The principal's performance review summarizes neatly the key targets for school improvement noting the possible roadblocks that may delay or restrict their realization. Goals are defined clearly under five headings with data collection and analysis and staff development identified as the two major priorities for further development. While targets are well defined, the impact that in-house study groups, turn-key and class visitations have on students' learning has not been evaluated rigorously.

The school is well placed to benchmark its performance over time. Data collection and analysis enables it to chart and compare the progress of its three distinct groups of students. Further school-based assessment indicated that cross-curricular and inter-disciplinary learning is taking place in all three instructional groups that the State alternate assessment did not identify. One of the areas where progress has been made significant is in the reduction of self-injurious behaviors and physical attacks (kicking, biting and pinching) on peers. Less emphasis is given, however, to gathering evidence confirming a reduction in aberrant behaviors than demonstrating an increase in students' repertoire of appropriate behaviors. The school is well placed to ensure that data collection enables the school to capture evidence its successes, particularly in relation to the school's effective behavior management practices. Plans are revised in response to students making limited progress. Academic intervention services provide additional instruction that supplements the general curriculum through push-in or pull-out sessions and offers the support of a guidance counselor or social worker to students judged to be at risk.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 4 K (PS 4K)	∅	✓	+
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	