



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Pacific School**

**Public School 38**

**450 Pacific Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11217**

**Principal: Yolanda Ramirez**

**Dates of review: February 28 – March 1, 2007**

**Reviewer: Georgie Beasley**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Pacific School has 476 students enrolled from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The student population is made up of 44% Black students, 40% Hispanic students, 12.7% White students and a small proportion of students from other backgrounds. A smaller proportion (7%) than in similar and City schools are English language learners. English, Spanish and Arabic are the main languages spoken by students. There are 9% special education students. At 93% attendance is about the same as that of similar and City schools. The principal and assistant principal are new to the school.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and assistant principal give strong, determined and purposeful leadership and good guidance for learning.
- The family atmosphere nurtures students' self-confidence and self-esteem.
- The whole staff work together well and are dedicated and committed to doing the best for the students.
- The principal's vision and values are established in practice because she and the assistant principal model expectations.
- Very good partnerships with outside services and community groups enrich curriculum experiences and enhance students' learning.
- Students behave well because they receive clear guidance and their relationships with adults are positive.
- The school makes good use of data to build a secure knowledge and understanding of each student's academic performance and progress.
- Communication is good and so all members of the school community know what is expected of them.
- The well-cared for physical environment and the positive climate are conducive to effective learning and pride in the school's work.
- Professional development opportunities are very effectively improving the range of teaching strategies and methods.

### What the school needs to improve

- Establish consistency in the school's enquiry approach to learning.
- Link goals for school performance and improvement more directly to the outcomes of data analysis.
- Establish clearer ways for administration to monitor the tracking of students' progress by class, grade and subject.
- Implement the school's plans for aligning curriculum maps to the process of learning.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

The school says, 'we're making great things happen' and indeed it is starting to do so. Smiling staff and students greet each other at every step. The principal and assistant principal are strong, purposeful and determined leaders who show by their own actions and conversations that this is how they want the school to be. All visitors are made to feel welcome because of the staff's positive approach. The well-maintained physical presentation of all areas of the building, the colorful displays of students' work and the many photographs of their engagement in learning activities, reflect the school's care and pride in what it does and show all students and staff how much their contribution is valued.

Many systems to review and evaluate the school's work are now in place, but they are still relatively new and so are not yet established in consistent practice across the school. A greater focus on a more enquiry approach to learning is beginning to develop students' skills and thinking alongside their knowledge of subject content. The school's commitment and dedication to continue to grow and to make things happen is evident in all its work.

### 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 gathers a wide range of data, both from State and City tests and its own school assessments and so has a secure knowledge and understanding of each student's performance and progress. Teachers keep a varied range of assessment data and conferencing notes for reading and writing and are currently extending systems to mathematics. The school is using the data well to compare students' performance in English language arts and mathematics year by year, by class and grade. As yet it does not compare how well it is performing against similar schools, mainly because the systems for analyzing and using data have been in place for too short a time and so the similar schools have not yet been identified. The Gains Report is beginning to be used very well to check whether students have made the progress they should at the end of each year. The system is not yet established in practice to check whether students are making enough progress during the year and so are on track to reach their goals. The administration team has plans to establish such a system next year.

The school analyzes the progress of all student groups within the school, including by gender, ability and ethnicity, and so knows which groups are progressing faster than others. It has put effective programs in place to improve the performance and progress of students in different ethnic groups and in particular boys' progress in literacy. Intervention support is checked closely and regularly against students' progress to ensure it is making a difference to their performance. Good attention is given to assessing and comparing the progress of special education students, English language learners and at risk 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.**

The principal’s goals for the year were established soon after she and the assistant principal arrived. Together they set out their expectations and quickly brought staff on board in the drive for improvement. Goals focus on individual student performance and progress in personal development and literacy and numeracy. Each one has a measure so the school knows when each has been achieved. The goal to extend arts education has been achieved through a range of in-school and extended day activities.

The school has built effective administration, cabinet and academic intervention teams that work closely together to agree and plan the action needed to meet the goals. Individual students’ academic and personal progress is monitored closely by staff and these teams, so that intervention support and programs grow from what the data is telling the school. Goals are not yet specifically linked enough to students’ expected end of the year performance because systems for analyzing data are new. However, a range of systems to analyze and review information is now in place to focus all aspects of the school’s work. Particularly good attention is given to students who need extra help to learn including special education students, English language learners and those at risk of slipping back a level. As a result, most students reach at least level 2 on State and City tests.

The school’s goals drive the work of all members of the school community. Parents are fully involved in the process. Goals are shared at formal meetings and at other times when parents are able to pop into school. Teachers make themselves available either in person or by email. Parents like the new report format which they say ‘shows that the school really cares about and knows their children well’. Curriculum workshops enable them to help their children at home. The school’s communication systems are good. All copies of notices and the principal’s messages to staff and parents are kept in handy binders in the office for easy reference. Oral and written translations into the school’s main languages are available for those parents who are not yet proficient in speaking and reading English.

**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 curriculum is organized to ensure mandated subjects and services are in place. Technology, science and arts subjects, including art, drama and music, are taught as cross-curricular themes, such as the Olympics project, in clusters or put on as after school choices to ensure students receive a broad range of subjects. The curriculum content and organization are currently under review with all staff working together to evaluate how well the curriculum is meeting students’ needs. Action plans are written to extend curriculum maps. They emphasize students’ skills and the process of learning alongside the teaching of mandatory subject content. Extensive enrichment activities have successfully involved all students and especially boys, to motivate them to develop an interest in learning.

Particular focus has been given to developing the way teachers conference with students, with some success. The information is used well to group students in class and to target specific students for the teaching of particular skills that have been identified by assessment as in need of improvement. When planning learning, most teachers now consider what it is they want students to learn. A few still plan what it is they want students to do and so sometimes students are not clear enough about what is expected of them in lessons. In these lessons students are not always fully engaged with the learning. The school has plans to ensure that the enquiry approach to learning is consistently used in all classes so that teachers focus not only on the question, 'What do I want the children to learn?' but also the question 'How best will we learn it?'

The principal has introduced new systems that make sure budget, scheduling and staffing decisions are based on the needs identified by data. For example, science is now taught in double periods so that practical investigations can be included in lessons to build student interest and engagement. Paraprofessionals and guidance counselors ensure students who need extra help to learn or to behave well receive good support. Resources are always available to support teaching and curriculum plans.

Recently revised report cards are examples of teachers' good knowledge of students' academic and personal achievements. Students behave consistently well at all times. Most students are happy to ask for help with their work. While the isolated occasions of misbehavior are handled positively, they say some adults do not always deal with incidents consistently, expecting students to sort things out for themselves or to ignore the actions of those causing bother. The forthcoming residential experience for students in grades 4 and 5 is a new enterprise, planned to develop both academic achievement and social and emotional skills. The wide and varied range of extended day and enrichment opportunities make a significant contribution to students' academic and personal development. The school's rigorous systems for monitoring absence are successfully improving attendance.

**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 well-developed features.**

Members of staff are selected according to their commitment to education and to the use of data to plan learning that engages and matches students' interests and needs fully. The new principal and assistant are making a real difference and have successfully brought staff on board. Every member of staff makes a positive contribution to the school's family and welcoming atmosphere, its bright, tidy and well-organized physical appearance and its positive learning climate.

Professional development opportunities are contributing effectively to school improvement and focus on the needs of individual teachers and those of the school. Teacher visit each other's classes and other schools to share good practice and develop its plans for more enquiry based learning. As a result, practice is strengthening, collaborative teamwork is growing and the sharing of ideas is a part of everyday practice.

The principal and assistant principal conduct regular walk-throughs, look at students' work and talk to students, staff and parents to monitor practice and build accountability. They use this to measure progress towards the school's goals for improving the quality of teaching and learning. They have a secure knowledge of each teacher's development

needs and have identified that everyone has strengths that can be used to support the school's drive for improvement. Teachers welcome the principal and assistant principal into their classes because of the positive, developmental and supportive feedback they receive. Planning in teams is a fairly recent part of the school's work. Teachers and paraprofessionals feel empowered and meet to plan work and evaluate their practice with a clear focus on making teaching more effective.

The principal has put many systems in place since her arrival in July. Positive relationships have created a happy yet purposeful school climate, where everyone is valued for their contribution. The family atmosphere nurtures students' self-confidence and self-esteem so by the time they leave for middle school, all are ready for the challenges ahead. Systems and communication have improved so procedures are clear to all members of the school community and ensure the team meetings are structured and focused on students' ongoing needs. The school runs very smoothly from day-to-day

Support services and community groups make a significant contribution to students' learning and progress. Parent leaders are reaching out into the community to gather even more support with the goal to get as many businesses as possible to 'adopt the school'.

**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.**

The school has introduced a range of systems for evaluating, monitoring and reviewing its effectiveness and is in the process of establishing these as continuous and consistent practice. Administration and cabinet teams meet regularly to discuss ongoing progress towards meeting its immediate goals and to review progress against the school's long-term goals for success. Goals are continually revised to ensure they focus on what the school needs to do next to improve. Programs and plans are revised if data is suggesting things are going better or worse than expected. In this way students' ongoing needs are now being tackled well, especially the needs of students who require particular support. Each year's review and data analysis informs the following year's goals setting.

Academic intervention, administration and cabinet teams regularly compare students' progress across classes, grades and subjects and plan support for those students who need extra help to reach their potential. Currently the information is kept on separate sheets, which meet their purpose, but make it difficult for administration to track quickly and at a glance students' overall rate of progress in each class and grade.

During June, all sections of the school community are involved in planning through the school's formal evaluation and goal setting processes and action planning, or by giving feedback and views about the school's performance. Goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan and the school's goals and objectives document focus on student achievement. Due to more comprehensive systems for looking at and analyzing data, the school is now in a position to begin to link its goals more specifically to the needs of each individual and group

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Pacific School (PS38)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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"> <li>each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>		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"> <li>ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>			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"> <li>all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		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.

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>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.</b>	Ø	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>		X	
<b>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.</b>	Ø	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>		X	
<b>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.</b>	Ø	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	