



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Little Red School House**

**Public School 065**

**158 Richmond Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11208**

**Principal: Daysi Garcia**

**Dates of review: May 29 - 30, 2007**

**Reviewer: Joseph Zaza**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The school is a kindergarten through 5th grade elementary school serving the Cypress Hills community of Brooklyn. The school is divided into two buildings with the Early Childhood Center serving kindergarten to Grade 2 housed in a building rented from St. Michael's School two miles away. There are currently 546 students enrolled. The ethnic make-up of the school is as follows: 10% Asian, 18% Black, 70% Hispanic and the English language learner population is 26%. The school receives Title I funding. The attendance rate of 91.6% is in line with both similar sized schools and the city average.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is well respected and sets clear goals and high expectations for the students, staff, and community.
- The relationships between all adults and students are excellent contributing to a strong sense of family ethos.
- All teachers effectively differentiate their instruction to respond to the specific needs identified through data analysis.
- The school has very efficient systems for collecting data that enable it to effectively monitor student progress.
- There is a strong team culture that enables teachers to plan collaboratively which has a positive impact upon instruction.
- The curriculum is academically rigorous and is enhanced by a rich extra-curricular program.
- Parents are very appreciative of the progress their children are making which promotes high parent engagement in the life of the school.
- Students enjoy attending this school, which leads to a high degree of student involvement in their lessons.
- The school has very good procedures for monitoring and reviewing its plans, which improves the overall quality of teaching and learning.
- Community based organizations and partnerships are strong and significantly enhance the learning experiences of the students.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to monitor and revise plans for the English language learners in order to increase achievement.
- Continue to promote the effective use of data such as DRA, through ongoing professional development.
- Develop further engagement of students into the life of the school through the formation of a student council.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well-developed school.**

The principal is well respected and sets clear goals and high expectations for the students, staff, and community. Student work is displayed throughout the school and great care is taken to celebrate students' achievements. There is a clear commitment from the staff to set high expectations not only for the children, but also for themselves. All teachers effectively differentiate their instruction to respond to the specific needs identified through data analysis. There is a strong team culture that enables teachers to plan collaboratively which has a positive impact upon instruction. The school provides a safe, respectful, and caring environment and thus there is a strong sense of family and community.

The school has developed very good data systems to check student performance and monitor student progress. The administration team has very good systems in place to monitor and review the school plans enabling it to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning. The team works very well with the teaching staff as they share ideas and support each other's work during planning meetings, data meetings, and pupil personnel meetings. The curriculum is academically rigorous and is enhanced by a rich extra-curricula program. As a result, students enjoy attending this school, which leads to a high degree of student and parent involvement in the life of the school. Community based organizations and partnerships are strong and significantly enhance the learning experiences of the students.

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

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

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

The school gathers a sophisticated range of data that it is using well to monitor performance and track student progress in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. Teachers constantly update the information they collect on students and share that information in their team meetings so they can track and improve student performance. Using the information that the data has provided, the school is able to quickly address weaknesses and implement change immediately.

The school makes very good use of technology to quickly and effectively track the progress of students through computer based programs. Using this data, teachers discuss the needs of individual students and differentiate their instruction in order to ensure that students make progress. The careful attention paid to the benchmarking enables the school to identify students that need additional academic support.

Teachers use a well developed range of running records, interim assessments, student portfolios, and conference notes to inform both individual strengths and weaknesses and greater school wide trends across grades, classrooms, and subgroups. The school very effectively monitors the performance of sub groups, which has resulted, for example, in additional curricular and after school support for English language learners, students that

perform at Level 1, and gifted and talent students. As a result, students have made excellent progress.

The school has a very good understanding of how much progress it has made in the last three years and takes its mission of fostering academic rigor very seriously. Consequently, the staff continue to look deeper into the data to uncover any information that could be useful helping students further. The school is very effective in identifying trends by comparing their school wide data against other schools as well as the creation of longitudinal studies of individual students. In the dual language class, for example, students' English language skills were progressing more slowly as compared to similar schools and against English Language Learners that were not enrolled in a Dual Language class, so the school immediately implemented changes to address the situation.

**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 well developed.**

All members of the school staff work closely together to identify goals for student performance. The staff shares detailed student and class summary sheets to determine actions steps for individual students, the classroom, or a sub group. Particular attention is given to English language learners some of whom are enrolled in dual language classes in the Early Childhood Center. The school recognizes that it needs to continue to monitor and revise plans for the English language learners in order to increase achievement.

The school creates very effective immediate action plans as well as short and long term plans. School leaders and faculty effectively analyze a wide range of data and share information with one another in a variety of formal and informal venues. Teachers and the administrative staff then engage in a collaborative process to set demanding goals and benchmarks. The staff discuss the needs of each student and then modify their plans according to these needs. Students deemed to be at risk are enrolled into early morning tutorial blocks and programmed into the after school program. English language learners receive additional instructional support and are enrolled into a Saturday program. Teachers identify which students need summer school and develop comprehensive student profile cards that will give their next teacher important information to ensure a quality start to the new school year.

Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress so they are able to support learning at home. High expectations of students are conveyed to parents through the publication of a weekly newsletter, a monthly breakfast with the principal, and the development of strong communication between teachers and parents. When a parent calls the school, for example, a teacher first reviews the student's progress data with the parent before discussing the matter that led to the phone call. High expectations are communicated to the students through many means including the posting of the school vision statement in every classroom and hallway, the school uniform requirement, and via teacher expectations of academic rigor in the class. The community is fully supportive of the school as organizations such as the Cypress Hills Community Group, Chess in the Schools, as well as local businesses. All the partnerships bring programs into the school that support the instructional plan.

**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 well developed.**

The school offers a rich interdisciplinary curriculum where the arts, social studies, and science support the English language arts and mathematics curricula. The Reading First program along with Everyday Mathematics help ensure students in the Early Childhood Center make good progress while the Regional Core Knowledge curriculum is implemented with efficiency with the upper grades. A scope and sequence-pacing calendar aligned to State standards drive the social studies and science curricula.

The principal and her administrative team does a very good job holding teachers accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes through the use of focused walkthroughs and snapshots as well as comprehensive reviews of data and student portfolios. The team is able to provide differentiated professional development to assist teachers understand how to align instruction to the school’s plan for student development and learning. Students are actively engaged in their lessons and grouped according to ability. Teachers effectively differentiate instruction based upon the data they collect so that students are not in the same groups each day.

The principal astutely utilizes the budget and scheduling to support the mission of the school. In addition to two Reading First coaches, the principal hired retired supervisors to mentor newly hired assistant principals, a retired teacher to head up the data team, and a part time English as a Second Language teacher. Teachers and the administrative team, including two aspiring principals are scheduled so that they can meet frequently to discuss the data and discuss how it can be used to monitor and adjust instruction.

Students respect and admire their teachers and the teachers know and respect their students. Students are thoroughly engaged in their learning and become especially excited when asked to break into their “learning center groups.” These small, carefully selected clusters of five students work interdependently in a variety of activities that their teachers monitor and support. Communication between the home and school is high as teachers and the administrative staff follow-up on student attendance, make home contacts, and are available to meet with parents. Parents are very happy with the dual language program with English speaking parents remarking that their child is teaching them Spanish!

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

**This area of the school’s work is well developed.**

The principal is well respected and sets clear goals and high expectations, which are shared by the staff, and inform the challenging goals, set out in the Comprehensive Educational Plan. The principal carefully selects staff that have a passion for learning, understand how to use data to inform instruction, and differentiate instruction to meet student needs. The principal collects data on all teachers through snapshot observations and a careful review of student data to assess the work of the teacher. The principal and her team very effectively program teachers by matching student needs with teacher strengths. Additionally, the principal, provides professional development for every staff member (including the hiring of a mentor for herself!) and hires mentors to work with teachers in their classrooms during professional meeting time and informally in “lunch and

learn” meetings. As the staff are still learning how to use data more effectively, the school understands that it needs to continue to provide more professional development in this area. Teachers work collaboratively in grade level planning meetings as well as data team meetings. They are very appreciative of the support they receive from the mentors, aspiring principals, and principal. There is a strong sense of collegiality and respect amongst the teachers. A first year teacher is well supported by senior teachers while also an integral part of the data team where she has taught her colleagues how to use Excel to analyze data.

The principal, assistant principals, and coaches regularly observe instruction. They give constant, immediate, and diagnostic feedback and support to teachers. The principal is widely respected and has demonstrably changed the culture of the school as well as improved student achievement. She sets clear expectations and the school runs very smoothly.

The principal has also gained the respect of the local community based organizations and local politicians. She has been able to secure capital improvement grants for the landmark building including upgrades to technology in the building. A partnership with an arts organization brings richness to the school curriculum and partnerships fund academically sound programs such as “Student of the Month” and “Author of the Month.” The school reciprocates by sending its chorus to perform at community events.

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

**This area of the school’s work is well developed.**

The principal and her team have clear goals for where each of the students should be throughout the year and by year’s end. The Comprehensive Education Plan is used well by the school’s leadership team to identify and analyze the schools strengths and weaknesses. When the team identified that English language learners were not progressing adequately, the school immediately addressed the weakness by hiring an English as a Second Language teacher as push in support for the students most in need. The school compares students across grades as well as longitudinally. Data revealed that the students in grade 4 were not doing as well as they had done the previous year. The principal and her staff changed the approach and reprogrammed staff to address this issue. Thus, planning across the short term is good, and enables precise, timely, and accurate interventions. Plans are monitored daily through observations and through analysis of data generated by periodic assessments, teacher made assessments, and teacher observations. The administrative team use a checklist and feedback system to comment on and improve teacher use of student portfolios. The school acts on this information and is not afraid to implement a new program or change daily instructional practice.

The school has also developed good long-range plans. For summer school, the Cypress Hill Community Organization will support the Reading First initiative. The principal plans to bring a teacher on staff well trained in the Core Knowledge curriculum. The highly functional team approach, supported by mentors, ensures that the needs of the students are constantly evaluated and programs are identified to further meet both student and school goals.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Little Red School House (PS 065)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<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>			<b>X</b>
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>			<b>X</b>
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>			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>

\* 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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		<b>X</b>	
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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<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>	∅	✓	+
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>	∅	✓	+
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>	∅	✓	+
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