



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Lefferts Park School

Public School 112

7115 15th Avenue

New York

NY 11228

Principal: Suzanne Brown I.A.

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Reviewer: Ken Bryan

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Lefferts Park School is a small elementary school serving 485 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The substantial main building is effectively organized and maintained. There are two kindergarten classes housed in temporary classrooms in the school yard. Fifty percent of students are Asian, 29% are White, 20% are Hispanic and 0.4% are Black. The school receives Title 1 funding. The proportion of special education students (7.9%) is below that of schools across the City. The proportion of English language learners (24%) is above that of similar schools, as well as schools across the City. Student attendance currently stands at 95%, which is higher than similar or City-wide schools.

The school has been identified as a collaborative community of practice model school. This provides teachers with the opportunity to attend professional development at Columbia's Teachers' College.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a very clear vision and she has high expectations for all members of the school community.
- The school gathers data effectively and uses it rigorously to inform instruction, goal setting and professional development.
- The quality of instruction is consistently high across the school and the students are fully engaged.
- The principal and the instructional team effectively set goals that are continually evaluated and modified, and are directly aimed at raising student achievement.
- Professional development support is delivered effectively within a culture of mutual trust, collaboration and respect.
- Instructional programs are carefully planned and effectively delivered, which has resulted in high levels of achievement for all learners.
- The parents are actively engaged in Public School 112's learning community and they are pro-active in providing support throughout the school.
- The school runs very smoothly and efficiently.
- The behavior and attitudes of the students are exemplary.
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What the school needs to improve

- Re-double efforts to seek further funding to augment the school's budget.
- Develop the use of technology for all faculty to include professional development and the procurement of smartboards, laptop computers and digital projectors.
- Improve the accommodation for art and music instruction.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school

Public School 112 successfully combines high expectations and professional rigor with very high student performance. It has a welcoming and involving culture where everyone is valued. The school's small size means that the teachers know their students and they set challenging goals resulting from effective data gathering and careful observations. The professional development provided for the staff is very effective and the quality of the instruction is consistently high. Academic programs for all students are of a high standard. This includes the programs for special education students, for English language learners and their families and for those students who are gifted and talented.

The whole school community, students, parents and staff, is actively engaged in the learning process. The principal is currently on maternity leave and works for two days per week. The transfer of leadership to the interim acting principal, an effective leader in her own right, has been seamless. The school's status as a collaborative community of practice has enabled it to develop further as a school of excellence. The school building is very well organized and the bright and educationally stimulating classrooms and hallways encourage learning.

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 effectively uses a variety of assessment data to inform planning, the setting of goals and the creation of differentiated individualized learning programs. Through the guidance of the principal and the instructional team, grade teachers effectively use objective assessments to track the progress of their students. Systems for comparing performance are robust and comprehensive. Through the use of the diagnostic report data, parents, students and teachers are actively engaged in the learning process together. The school identifies trends effectively through the formal testing process. Evaluation includes the school report card, standardized test scores, Grow report data, the Princeton Review and City and State tests. Continuous assessment is informed by guided reading, benchmarking in comprehension and fluency, the use of annotated portfolios, conference notes and other unit tests. The use of assessment binders has been particularly successful as a means of tracking individual student progress.

Intervention programs for the small group of English language learners and to meet the needs of special education students are very well informed by the outcomes of assessments. Reading recovery classes and speech and language support are good examples. Coaches meet with faculty to support planning for intervention and general education programs. There is on-going articulation between the classroom teacher, academic intervention specialists, the speech teacher, the reading recovery teacher and counseling services. The school is very good at comparing individual student progress through the use of interim assessments. The effective use of teacher observations, the

compiling of annotated portfolios and the use of student conferences underpin the more formal City and State assessments. Comparative data is analyzed rigorously at grade and whole school level on a regular basis and the teachers competently revise and adapt their goals and programs accordingly.

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

Data is used effectively to drive the school’s goal-setting agenda. Data lies at the heart of the comprehensive education plan, the planning for instruction, the formulation of intervention programs and the tracking of individual student progress. The comprehensive education plan, the curriculum map and the data analysis file clearly reflect the links between data and goal setting, such as the planning for student intervention programs. Teachers meet at grade conferences and during instructional team meetings to consistently explore documented themes. The school leadership team meets once a month to review the comprehensive education plan. The students are grouped heterogeneously across the school. The school successfully uses data to inform the work of the academic intervention staff who have provided extended day classes and ‘push-in’ programs for students with personal intervention plans. The school has developed a successful ‘traffic light’ system to trigger reading intervention. Teachers regularly meet in grade teams to collaboratively set challenging goals for students. The success of these strategies has led to an increase in the number of students performing at or above grade level in reading and mathematics, and a reduction in the number of students performing below grade level.

The school has very high expectations, not only in terms of the levels of student achievement but also for the faculty. Raw score diagnostic data is used effectively to set targets for improvement. This information is regularly communicated to parents, who are encouraged to access the data on-line. Information includes the calendar, newsletters, current trends and expectations, past performance data and a shared vision. This is a very powerful tool and the participation in this school is high. Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activities of all members of the school community through grade meetings, the effective instruction team, the workings of the school leadership team, academic intervention meetings and regular communications with the parents and caregivers.

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 appropriately aligns the instructional activity, resources and student engagement by analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the students. All teachers work collaboratively to create curriculum maps for reading, writing, mathematics and social studies. Classroom teachers rise to the principal’s high expectations in their skilful collection of data through conferencing, running records and daily observations. The high quality of instruction is consistent across the school. Teachers are held accountable for

improving instruction and for student outcomes. There is an open and transparent culture of professional development and the teachers use well-developed systems for monitoring student progress and setting goals. The teachers plan and differentiate their instruction based upon the needs of the students and upon available in-school, City or State data.

The principal encourages creative adaptations to the mandated curriculum, and the instructional programs actively engage the students. The school offers a wide range of opportunities and programs for all students and adult learners. However, the school at present lacks the levels of funding needed to finance its ambitious goals to enhance the use of technology and accommodation for music, as well as to maintain the high quality of its educational programs and to broaden programs for physical education.

Student attendance is high. The systems used to challenge absence are rigorous and consistent. The students are engaged, their needs are met and the classes are stimulating and motivating. The children just want to be at school. With the guidance of the parent coordinator, the parents are kept well informed, and there are strong links with the home.

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

Teachers have been selected according to their subject or grade expertise and upon their capacity to rigorously use data. The principal is careful to select staff who can challenge and motivate the students. The vetting process is effective. The principal has high expectations for her faculty both in terms of pedagogic proficiency and its ability to improve student performance. These expectations are being met.

The provision for staff development is a strong feature of the school. All programs carefully respond to the needs of the staff, identified through the robust use of data analysis, classroom observations and reviews of the curriculum map. Grade conferences each month effectively focus upon the school's bottom-line goals and individual strengths, and areas for development for grade teachers. An instructional team meets regularly to monitor the quality of instruction and learning. There is a strong sense of collaboration and support in an open and transparent atmosphere of trust and respect. The increasing use of inter-visitations to enable teachers to share good practice has added to this professional openness. Ideas, methods and resources are frequently shared. Professional development opportunities have been augmented through the involvement of the Teachers' College. A good example of this was the use of a survey to determine professional development needs in the use of technology. Differentiated workshops were provided as part of the school's on-going support in this area. The principal visits classrooms each day and she has a strong relationship with the faculty, the instructional team, the parent coordinator and staff. The teachers continually review and adapt their instructional programs during grade meetings. Again, the instructional team guides the process. This is an influential group.

The use of partnerships with outside bodies is another strong feature of the school. The on-going links with parents, via the parent coordinator, visits to other venues to support the arts and science programs, and links with Columbia University all add to the experiences of the students.

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 school frequently reviews its goals and plans. This is an effective and well-organized process. Goals set are reviewed and progress is considered accordingly by the school's administration. The comprehensive education plan is written yearly and modifications are made throughout the year by the school leadership team. The detailed and effective comprehensive education plan is seen as a working document and is used as an effective tool for whole school improvement. The school leadership team, half of whom are parents, meets monthly to review the school's progress and alignment to its goals.

Student data is continuously used to inform the school self review process. Interim assessments provide the principal with evidence for well-designed modifications to the programs. The school carefully uses this analysis to adjust the curriculum binders through studying the success of each unit. The curriculum map, the comprehensive education plan and pupil data are reviewed each June at the beginning of the review cycle when short, medium and long-term plans are set. Whole school priorities are determined at this time.

Information gathered from periodic assessments is constantly reviewed in light of individual and school-wide goals. Grade conferences and common preparation times are used very effectively to consider student data and to set further goals for improvement. Cohort and individual student achievement targets are set at this time. Curriculum maps are regularly modified, taking into account the achievements of the students. This is a particularly effective feature. For example, the mandated curriculum has been creatively modified to enable students to make even better progress. The school has adopted a very agile and flexible but robust strategy for school self-evaluation.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Lefferts Park School (PS 112).	∅	✓	+
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