



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Public School 141
655 Parkside Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11226**

Principal: Arthur Fusco

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Reviewer: David King

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 141 is a multi-site school located on four sites in Brooklyn. There are 380 students arranged across 43 classes. There are 135 students who take standard assessments, and 245 students who take alternate assessments. Three sites include a mixture of both groups of students and include students in grade 6 and above. The fourth site services an elementary program for students who are subject to alternate assessment.

The school has 230 professional and support staff including the principal. There are four assistant principals and 71 teachers. In addition there are 117 paraprofessionals, eight speech teachers and a further 27 staff including therapists, counselors, social workers and health staff. Of the teachers on the staff 34% have two years or less teaching experience.

The ethnic breakdown of students is 56.35% Black, 33.7% Hispanic, 7.4% White and 2.9% Asian and others. The gender breakdown is 67% male and 33% female. There are 47 English language learners. Students of all ages are accepted and enrolled in the school at different points throughout the year.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision and provides strong leadership.
- The school makes use of a wide range of data to gain a clear picture of the performance and progress of all of its students.
- The school uses data rigorously to drive instruction.
- The school has well-developed systems for setting short- and medium-term goals for students.
- The school aligns its curriculum to enable it to collect meaningful data about student progress.
- The instructional leadership team monitors teacher performance closely.
- The principal uses the budget wisely to support learning.
- The staff demonstrate a genuine care for the students and are responsive to academic and personal needs.
- The instructional leadership team provides a tightly-focused professional development program.
- The school has aligned, and routinely uses, support services and partnerships to achieve its stated goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop analysis of the performance of the various groupings within the school, such as ethnicity, to ensure that there are no common barriers to learning.
- Review scheduling to accommodate common planning time for teachers within and across sites.
- Continue to monitor and support the high numbers of new and inexperienced teachers.
- Further empower staff at all levels in order to build capacity within the school.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

Public School 141 is a District 75 school with a welcoming, caring and inclusive environment providing a rich educational experience for the whole school community. The principal has created a school where students enjoy learning, the staff enjoy working and where parents are happy to send their children. The principal has very strong values and insists on high standards. He is deeply committed to his students getting the best from their education and he is fully supported by his staff in trying to achieve that goal. He operates in a very professional manner and knows the strengths of the individuals on his staff.

The school has many positive features. Staff are very knowledgeable about each student, collect data at regular points throughout the year and use that information to drive instruction. They are skillful at setting short-, medium- and long-term goals and teachers are both accountable for instruction and well supported in the delivery of the curriculum. Students feel safe and cared for within the school. Links with parents and other external partnerships are positive and productive, providing the students with a range of engaging activities. The professional development program is well structured and designed to help all staff improve their practice and ensure that students make good progress. Relationships with the general education schools on shared sites are good.

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 is excellent at collecting data to track the performance of its students year by year. It makes effective use of formal assessments such as the Princeton review, its own interim assessments and the daily conference/goals log. These assessments enable teachers to record student progress, discuss goals for improvement and keep written evidence on each student's progress. Data for each site is slightly different. At the elementary site, located at PS380, where alternate assessment is in place, observational information which relates quite specifically to individualized education plans is efficiently gathered by teachers and paraprofessionals. At the other sites, assessment data is gathered related to levels, as well as conference logs. Assessment portfolios at all of the sites are well kept and used systematically.

The school has good systems for monitoring the performance of various groups of students, although there is less emphasis on ethnicity. Staff are particularly knowledgeable about the most vulnerable students, such as those in foster care, and takes a close interest in their progress. Monitoring takes place at frequent intervals, usually at the end of a quarterly marking period.

The school is fully aware of how its performance compares with similar schools in District 75. The available data on performance shows it has the second lowest numbers of students at level 1 and it is fourth highest in the number of students at levels 3 and 4. Its performance in these categories has shown a steady improvement over the last three years. Administrators compare the outcomes from different teaching teams to ensure that students are equally well served.

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.

Goals are established for all of the students from their individualized education plans. These include both academic and social goals. Those students following the alternate assessment programs have individual goals such as word recognition using a combination of scaffolds. The aim is to achieve 80% mastery before moving up to the next level of achievement. The data collected is well reviewed and informs teachers’ planning effectively. Classroom teams work effectively together, and additional service providers, teachers and paraprofessionals see themselves having a common purpose.

The students who take standard assessments have goals based on skills recorded in the Princeton review and New York State assessments. Pacing charts are well developed in English language arts and students are well supported by the academic intervention services and test preparation services. The Edmark program, Reading 180 and the school’s own Project Genesis are all used highly effectively to establish suitable measurable and achievable goals for the students. This has proved to be a great motivator in improving student performance. All classrooms contain references to student goals and teachers reflect on their instruction and establish short-term goals every week. This is efficiently monitored by the coaches and assistant principals and has been a significant contributor to helping students achieve their goals. The students understand the academic and behavior programs and what they must achieve in order to move to a less restrictive environment. The school has been successful in achieving its 10% target of return to less restrictive environment over the last two years.

Expectations within the school are high and achievements are given a high profile. Programs such as Project Genesis and Bookworm are displayed with an honors board and they are highly motivational for students. Parents are invited to share student achievement through journals and a variety of achievement fairs arrange by the school. Parents and caregivers are given good advice about how to teach their children at home in a way that will help them to meet their goals.

The area of goal-setting is a strong feature of the school and it is effective in driving the activities of all members of the school community. Whole-school goals are effectively shared with staff and students.

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 is very good at aligning instructional programs to meet the needs of its students. It uses the Princeton review carefully to identify students' skill deficits and then plans study units with quarterly marking periods. The units of study are driven by the ten reading habits the school has highlighted and also include a close reference to the development of vocabulary and figurative language. The curriculum is planned by units of study committees which also include additional intervention services staff. This differentiated program proves effective in matching learning programs to specific student needs. In addition, the 'Read 180' program has been successfully implemented with grade 7. It matches reading choices to learning styles and ensures that each student has an individual reading log. Further 'Ramp Up' and 'Step Up' programs are being successfully implemented to support reading and writing in grades 6 and 7.

Teacher logs are kept, based on observations by the assistant principals and the coaches. The school's own lesson planning format is monitored and there must be reference to expected student outcomes for each activity the teacher undertakes with the students. This means both teachers and paraprofessionals are accountable for the work they do in class.

The budget is effectively used to improve student outcomes. The principal has an assistant managing each of the four sites and he has appointed a coach for each of the alternate and standard assessments programs. This has had a clear impact on teacher performance. Significant funding has been allocated to resources for classrooms. This is greatly appreciated by staff. Another significant investment has been made in improving computer facilities with electronic boards and additional computers. These have proved highly motivational for students.

The principal has hired 28 new staff from the New York City teaching fellows program and 27 new paraprofessionals in the last two years. These new staff are being effectively inducted into the school, and are progressing well. Their relative inexperience necessitates significant monitoring of their performance, and, appropriately, decisions about how to make best use of their skills are still being made. The spread of the school across four sites creates a challenge when getting staff groups at all levels of seniority together. Some creative scheduling has created common preparation time on individual sites and the aim is to extend this to include staff from other sites.

Scheduling decisions are made with the aim of producing students who can become lifelong learners and also to prepare them for moving on to a less restrictive high school environment. Grade 8 students undertake exit projects and regular curriculum reviews to monitor progress. The impact of this is noticeable in the high levels of enthusiasm students demonstrate for learning and in the events such as the science and technology fairs in which students proudly showcase their work. The students are well cared for and there is a good atmosphere of respect in the school between staff and students.

Attendance is higher than in many other District 75 schools and each site monitors this closely, with calls home and the involvement of family and attendance officers. There are incentives for good 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 well developed.

The staff is highly motivated, sharing the school's expectations and demonstrating a high level of commitment. However, a high proportion of the staff from the New York City teaching fellows program and a number of paraprofessionals are new to the school. The principal is aware of the strengths of each member of his staff, evidenced from their portfolios, but recognize that this group needs to be monitored closely by the instructional leadership team.

Two coaches provide professional development for the 28 teaching fellows who operate across the full range of subject areas within both alternate and standard assessment curricula. The school has a limited number of days for professional development and there is no common professional development time with the host school. As a result, the school has put together its own program, driven by the assistant principals and the coaches. The professional development modules program is very detailed and covers a wide range of topics, each of which highlights expected student outcomes and selects staff participants according to need. Title 2 funding is used well to support the program. However, the opportunities for professional development are more limited because of time.

The principal and the assistant principals undertake frequent observations of staff, following the staff rubrics generated by District 75. Feedback is supportive and includes guidance to develop best practice and next steps to follow, which are time-limited and include reference to student outcomes.

The school has a wide range of partnerships with community-based organizations, all of which are used to support school and student goals. These have included a teachers' and writers' collaborative, a poetry residency, the use of autism consultants and a Shakespeare residency. The sites run smoothly and the principal is respected by all the staff.

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 has a detailed Comprehensive Education Plan with action plans for its implementation and monitoring. It is a document which is used flexibly and guides improvement planning for all four of its sites. Plans are revised when new information comes to light and student schedules are being continually re-evaluated. Currently, the drive for improvement and development is led by the cabinet, and a next phase of development for the school is to include newer staff more fully in pursuance of the school's priorities.

The school is flexible in its approach to scheduling. Learning is organized to respond to the needs of students. Special projects are set up in September but data is used regularly to review goals and take appropriate action where necessary. This is the case with a number of aspects including attendance, students moving to less restrictive environments,

suspensions, improving achievement of students at various levels, and teacher support. The vast majority of students are challenged by the instruction and the atmosphere in the school is very positive. The school acknowledges that the needs of all its students must be catered for, and offers them a range of experiences to improve self-esteem and achieve improved academic performance. The constant evaluation of student performance and the willingness of all the staff to modify student goals and plans where necessary make this school particularly successful.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 141	∅	✓	+
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