



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Museum Alliance for Science and Technology

Public School 154

**1625 11 Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11215**

Principal: Frances Ruiz

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Reviewer: Charlene Jordan

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

This is a magnet school for science and technology with 404 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. Approximately 16% are special education students and 5% are English language learners. Both proportions are smaller than similar and City schools. More than 52% of the students are White, approximately 28% of the students are Hispanic, 11% are Black, and 5% are Asian/Pacific Islander. The number of White students is higher than most similar and City schools, while the number of Black and Hispanic students is less than similar and City Schools. The school is not Title I eligible.

At 93%, attendance is typical of that found in similar and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a clearly articulated vision focused on building a data driven community.
- The principal and the assistant principal have formed an effective and collegial partnership.
- The common planning time for teachers reflects effective use of programming and budget.
- Parents are welcome partners in the school and have become more involved through the year of 'Parents as Enrichment Partners' and through being learning leaders.
- The school effectively forms partnerships and collaborations with community organizations to enrich learning.
- Teaching staff is collegial and collaborative and benefits from the focused professional development and their shared expertise.
- The school utilizes a 'push in' model for most of the interventions, thus enabling students with academic needs to remain with their peers for the majority of their day.
- There is a great deal of emphasis on curriculum planning and close attention to consistency, coherence, and standards based alignment.
- The school rigorously monitors attendance and its high expectation is clearly communicated to students and parents.

What the school needs to improve

- Clarify the process of how the vision translates into using data for strategic and collaborative planning, for the development of specific curricular goals, the monitoring and assessing of progress, and any revision as needed.
- Continue to build collaborative leadership and capacity based on the expertise and involvement of staff.
- Create and implement the school's strategic plan to extend inquiry based instruction and project based learning across all content and grade levels.
- Establish a whole school commitment to providing effective interventions and enrichment for accelerating students' progress.
- Compare data more closely to pinpoint precise reasons why some students do better in some subjects than others, and implement subsequent action plans.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal's vision of forming a data driven community has resulted in good improvement in the school's ability to analyze data to inform instruction and plan effective interventions within the last two years. However, there is still some work to do especially in building a collaborative team approach to using data to create and implement strategic plans for the school's future development. For this reason, the review agrees with the school's view that it is proficient overall. The school has successfully developed some effective partnerships. The role of parents has developed so that they now give more focused support when working in the school and when helping their children at home. The principal and assistant principal have formed strong collaborations with community organizations and external consultants to support the work of teachers and enrich learning for the students. There is clear capacity to continue to improve.

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 principal and staff use a range of data from standardized tests and from school developed tools and resources to provide the school with a secure overview of the performance and progress of individual students in English language arts and mathematics. Ongoing review of teachers' own running records, journals, portfolios and stages of reading charts takes place in team meetings, often supported by the academic intervention teacher and by the principal in one-on-one conferences with various teachers and staff. Data is further disaggregated by ethnicity and gender and to identify those students who need an extra push to reach grade standards. While this information is generated and collated, it is not yet analyzed fully to identify emerging trends in the performance of these groups.

Through its analysis of data, the school is aware that the special education students and English language learners are not making the progress that they should be. Therefore it has changed the way it provides interventions and, with the exception of the Wilson program, is now focused on a push in model. This change is already seeing some improvements in the rate of progress of these groups and is part of a larger strategy to target improved progress for students in all subgroups.

The school compares the overall performance of students each year to similar and City schools and by grade and class to note trends in the progress and performance of individual students in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies but has not yet moved to comparing the same group of students over time to measure progress and to inform the development of detailed strategic action plans.

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 has articulated a clear vision for focusing on data driven instruction and improving test scores. The Comprehensive Education Plan includes goals for implementing this vision and indicates some incremental measures for improving student performance. However, collaborative strategic planning on how to implement whole-school goals that have measures that align to students’ actual and expected performance within a clear timeframe has not yet occurred.

The school has used data to identify goals for individual student achievement. For example, the whole school community is very focused on the goal of improving students’ problem solving skills and the writing process in mathematics. Specific data on student’s academic progress is utilized to track the effectiveness of interventions and the use of the additional mandated instructional time for students in greatest need of improvement. As a result, there are clear goals for the work that is to be done with these groups of youngsters and progress is monitored closely, noted and shared with the classroom teacher.

Students know that there are high expectations for their achievement and so they are able to explain their areas of strength and have some knowledge of their areas for improvement. Administrators and teachers provide ongoing communication and open access to parents about the work of the school. As a result, parents play a very active role in the school. Through regular consultation evenings and conversations with staff, they are knowledgeable about their children’s’ progress and the academic goals for each grade level.

Everyone’s efforts are supported by the strong community partnerships and are focused on the goals that the school has for improving instruction and progress.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

With the principal’s support, the teachers write curriculum that is aligned to standards and emphasizes consistency and coherence across grade levels and content areas. A science staff developer and an inquiry based approach to learning in social studies, along with a strong museum partnership, is being utilized to improve the test results and academic performance in these content areas.

Teachers are clear about their responsibility and accountability for student learning. Data and academic progress is analyzed through daily grade level team meetings and through work with the magnet coordinator and cluster teachers. Support for students is ongoing and there have been many additional opportunities for enrichment activities incorporated into the Friday schedule. The school has begun to use inquiry based learning, specifically aligned to social studies curriculum. This has resulted in project based learning activities for students, particularly focused on non-fiction reading and writing experiences.

The common planning time for teachers, the hiring of consultants, curriculum and intervention specialists reflects effective use of programming, budget, and staffing decisions. For example, a math consultant has assisted teachers with focusing on problem solving and writing process. A literacy consultant is supporting teachers' increased use of conferring and the principal's emphasis on tracking reading progress, and a science staff developer is working on item analysis of test questions and realigning the curriculum. This is further supported by the emphasis on technology and the hiring of a magnet grants coordinator to assist teachers with the integration of technology into curriculum.

Evidence of project based work and applications of learning to real life experiences are displayed throughout classrooms and hallways in the building. Authors' workshops bring writing alive for students and help them build confidence in their ability to write. However, there is still work to do in fostering the engagement of all students in these heterogeneous classes, especially those who are high achieving.

Teachers know their students well and are in regular communication with each other and with parents to ensure that students' needs are being met. The principal and assistant principal are visible throughout the building and at school events but not enough regular, structured opportunities take place with children so that all students feel listened to and cared for.

The school rigorously monitors attendance and this expectation is clearly communicated to students and parents so all students attend regularly. Teachers and other school staff follow up daily to determine why students are absent and assist them with re-entry into the school, particularly in cases of absences due to illness.

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.

The principal is very focused on building a data driven community and teachers are hired based on their knowledge of content, commitment to learning, a love of children, and a commitment to collaboration. Teachers and parents are invited to participate on the hiring committee. Members of the Parents Association participated in the hiring of staff last summer.

Staff surveys provided important information for this year's professional work. Professional development is based on specific needs and the evidence from the data in English language arts and mathematics. Conferring strategies in literacy have become more focused and problem solving and writing in mathematics have been emphasized this year as a result of training and coaching embedded in classrooms. Teachers are supported effectively by outside consultants and close partnership with the Teachers College, AUSSIES, and by a science staff developer. For example, the Brooklyn Museum collaboration offers workshops and classroom visits to support an emerging inquiry based approach to social studies in grades 3 through 5. The science staff developer works closely with teachers to plan and implement the science fair and supports science instruction in grades pre-kindergarten through 2 throughout the year.

The teaching staff is collegial and collaborative and shares their expertise in a variety of ways, including the common planning time that is built into the schedule. The principal and

assistant principal visit classrooms frequently and have provided concrete instructional plans to improve the teaching of some staff. However, this feedback and coaching is not sufficiently systematic.

Grade level leaders serve as liaisons to the cabinet and so influence the direction of the curriculum work. However, while the principal and assistant principal are viewed as an effective and well balanced team that is successfully leading school improvement, the building of collaborative leadership in other staff members is not sufficiently robust. The teachers are not yet full partners in translating the principal's vision into using data for strategic planning, monitoring of student progress, and revision as needed.

Clearly articulated procedures are used to effect an orderly and safe environment and so the school runs smoothly on a daily basis. Student surveys are utilized to determine the effectiveness of learning activities and to plan for this year, as evidenced by an increased number of enrichment activities. Effective and varied partnerships with community organizations enrich learning and the work of teachers and students. The pupil personnel committee effectively analyzes data and plans interventions and next steps for the most at risk 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 proficient.

The school has developed a system for regularly assessing the progress of students and using this information to make adjustments to the instructional program. As a result, conferring practices and attention to reading progress has improved this year, there is a more focused approach to inquiry based instruction, and there are planned revisions to the science curriculum as a result of item analysis of test questions.

An analysis of the progress of special education students over several years led to obtaining a grant to plan for the implementation of collaborative team teaching next year in the fifth grade. Extended day groupings of students are developed by the intervention specialist and teachers. Growth in specific areas is monitored and results in appropriate class instruction as follow up so that progress of students is measured and interventions are measured for effectiveness.

On the spot assessments are being used this year as a way of measuring understanding about units of study in all content areas. The school has moved to a system of attaching specific names to the learning taking place and focusing on mini lessons and interventions to address learning gaps.

Based on observations of the principal, assistant principal, and teachers about students' struggles with writing and the disconnect between the current reading and writing units, the external consultant will be working with staff this June to realign reading and writing across grade levels and to set next year's goals. Similarly, data was analyzed to make the decision about focusing on problem solving and writing process in mathematics this year. However, the school still has work to do on comparing data more closely to pinpoint the precise reasons why some students better in some subjects than others, and implement subsequent action plans.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Museum Alliance for Science & Technology (PS154)	∅	✓	+
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	