



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

William T Sampson

Public School 160

**5105 Fort Hamilton Parkway
Brooklyn
NY 11219**

Principal: Margaret Russo

Dates of review: January 16, 2007

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The William T. Sampson School, Public School 160, is an elementary school which serves an ethnically diverse population in Brooklyn. It has been designated an America's Choice Model School. The school has 786 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The greatest proportion of pupils, 66%, comes from Asian backgrounds. The next largest group, at 20%, is Hispanic, with the remaining 15% being from other backgrounds. Over half the students are English language learners, and nearly all are eligible for Title 1 funding. Five per cent of the students have special education needs. At around 95%, attendance at the school is above both similar and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is an inspirational leader, manages the school very effectively and is highly respected by staff, parents and pupils alike.
- Students achieve very well and are making excellent progress from a low starting point.
- Achievement in English language arts, mathematics and science are well above average when compared to similar and City schools.
- The teaching is very good, much of it is excellent.
- Teachers set demanding targets for the students.
- School leaders use extensive data to understand what each student knows and can do, so as to effectively monitor their progress over time.
- The behavior of the students is excellent and the school runs in quiet good order.
- Parents are delighted with the school; saying it is "home from home" for their children.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning throughout the school is excellent.
- There is a particularly wide range of enrichment activities which provides good all round development of students.

What the school needs to improve

- Further improve strategic planning to enable the school to monitor its good improvement more efficiently.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

Public School 160 is an elementary school which gives students an excellent start in life. It has been designated a 'High Performing/Gap Closing school' by the New York State Education Department for two consecutive years. It has also been designated an America's choice model school. This is the school where students are encouraged to do their best to become well rounded citizens, both academically and socially. The emphasis is very much on learning together to achieve highly, celebrating each individual and creating a caring environment in which to work.

This community school has got everyone committed to giving their best. Leadership and management are exemplary. The principal has just started her third year in the school and in that time, she has turned it around. Teachers are very well monitored and data is used very effectively to improve student progress. Lessons are lively and interesting and students actively assess their own learning, because they want to do better. This very good teaching and learning is central to the school's success. From a low start, where 88% of the school is an English language learner, students are going on to achieve levels well above those of similar and City schools.

How well the school meets New York City 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.

Teachers assess students in a variety of ways; formally with well established Department of Education tests and informally with teacher generated assessments, checklists and teacher conferences. Staff are constantly looking at students work and assessing their level of ability. Progress is tracked in relation to the individual's past performance, class results, grade level, and subject area. Each student has an assessment portfolio of annotated work, and there is a class folder for writing and mathematics. Teachers carry assessment binders containing conference notes on every child to help differentiate their teaching so that each child is challenged appropriately. If a student is identified as needing help, there are numerous intervention strategies available such as Academic Intervention Services, Wilson program and Great Leaps. This excellent use of data is why the school is so successful in maintaining high standards and setting measurable goals for long-range improvement.

The school is very inclusive. It caters very well for both students with special educational needs and those who are academically gifted or talented with a range of intervention strategies to ensure that these students are well challenged and make good progress. The principal and her assistant principal carefully analyze all language, gender and ability groups' performance ensuring that their achievement is in line with the goals set. Student outcomes are also appropriately compared to other similar schools and students' own past performance.

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.

The school uses the substantive data described above to enable the setting of whole school goals to ensure that students make good progress. Teachers are constantly adapting their teaching methods and ideas to ensure that each student makes the best possible progress.

Every week teachers meet to annotate work and plan for the next semester. They spend two or three hours in formal and informal observations of their colleagues’ teaching and are very accurate in the grading of students work and in advising them what they need to do in order to improve. Regular meetings to improve teaching and learning are a major strength of the school. The pupil personnel team meets on a regular basis once a fortnight. Every student causing concern has a case manager and the student’s progress and improvement is looked at, after speaking to the student, staff and their parents. The sharing of such expertise ensures that teachers’ planning is well matched to the needs of all students. Any students having difficulties are soon identified and referred to a wide range of support services. Because these services are so widely used by the school they work very well together sharing information and making sure there is a coordinated approach to the problem. It is clear that these interviews are successful. Parents are very appreciative of the help they have received and records show that the school is very successful in making sure that no child is left behind.

Expectations for all students are very high. Targets are shared with students and parents regularly. Parents have two formal meetings a year but are invited in to discuss their child’s performance and how to improve it as and when this becomes necessary. Progress towards the goals is well tracked to ensure that all students are achieving according to their potential.

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 way the school aligns its teaching, learning and resources around the goals it sets for each student is impressive. All areas of student learning are developed through a wide range of enrichment classes. For example, technology, drama, dance and band enrich the mandated curriculum for the students. This helps them to be more motivated, confident and well prepared for life skills. The curriculum is effectively customized through professional development plans. Coaches are part of the cabinet. The coaches support new teachers and professional development is undertaken by the mainstream teachers. Teachers’ high expectations and the exciting curriculum that is offered throughout the school are very successful in motivating the students who enjoy their lessons and find learning fun. Teachers are constantly adapting their methods of instruction to make learning more relevant and to inspire students to take the learning further themselves. Staff know and respect students and respond to their personal needs. Each student

knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her. The results of this can be seen in the students' very good achievement and behavior.

Attendance is well above average compared with similar and City-wide schools. Absences are very promptly followed up. Students report that they love school. They have excellent attitudes towards learning which many see as a life long process. The school budget is used carefully to support the curriculum and planned improvements. Teachers feel very accountable for student's learning and make sure that they get value for money in the range of resources that they use to inform their instruction. Information about student progress is used well in ensuring that high expectations are reflected in the range of reading materials bought. Without compromising the curriculum the principal has, through careful budgeting and the deployment of staff and resources, responded to needs identified through data and analysis. Reading and writing are a real strength of the school. Despite this, the school continues to develop its writing, to raise levels of achievement even further.

Teachers are very collaborative. They constantly discuss the effectiveness of their teaching, and how to improve their students' progress. For example, in curriculum mapping exercises they ensure the alignment of instruction with the necessary skills and concepts.

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.

Public School 160 is characterized by its concern for the academic and social welfare of its students. All the students are known to the principal, who appreciates and respects them as individuals and takes pleasure in their successes. The principal has only been at the school for two and a half years, but in this time she has won the respect and loyalty of the students, staff and parents. Parents are particularly pleased that their children are encouraged to develop as individuals. They feel that the principal has turned the school around and has been very successful in sharing her high expectations with both the staff and students. Her commitment to continued improvements in all areas, including instruction, organization, professional development, student support and community relations is exemplary. As a result, procedures are clear, communicated to all, and the school runs with quiet good order.

Because the principal and her assistant principal are constantly in the classrooms; observing staff formally and informally, talking to students and looking at their work, they have a very detailed knowledge of the strengths and areas for development for all staff and students. Professional development is based directly on this knowledge. As this is an America's choice school, this is further augmented by visits from teachers who come from other schools in the district to share good practice and attend workshops run by experts. This means there are numerous opportunities for professional development for the staff. Staff turnover is consequently very low. Appointments are made on the applicant's high expectations for student performance and progress and on their commitment and ability to develop and improve that performance. Teachers are all very well qualified, highly motivated, energetic and caring. The climate of mutual support and collaboration is a key factor in why the school runs so smoothly. Visiting specialists, such as dance and drama teachers, provide students with specialist tuition to extend their learning experience.

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.

All areas of the school's work are constantly and carefully planned drawing on all the available data. The effortless way that data is analyzed and used is a major strength. The monitoring and revision of planning for all students is systematic and almost taken for granted among staff. As a result, staff plan regularly and evaluate and revise interventions and initiatives according to the needs of the students. However, the school is not complacent, and all staff are committed to further improvement. This has started with the Comprehensive Education Plan, which although it has been used well as a working document, has not been in place for a long enough period to be of immediate use as a strategic planning tool. The leadership team is planning to extend their development plan to three years to enable them to be more proactive in setting long-term measurable objectives.

Comparisons of student progress across classrooms and schools are used in making interim assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions. Plans are also revised when analysis of students' results make it necessary to adapt their future work when they have not been successful. 'Push-in' literacy sessions are good examples of the school's flexibility in realigning its practices to improve student academic outcomes.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: William T. Sampson (PS 160)	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
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.	Ø	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
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.	Ø	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.			X
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X