



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Ida Posner School**

**Public School 165**

**76 Lott Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11212**

**Principal: Fran Ellers**

**Dates of review: May 29 - 31, 2007**

**Reviewer: John Hudson**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Ida Posner School provides education for approximately 630 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 7. Over 90% of the student enrollment is Black and 8% is Hispanic. Others include very small proportions of White and Asian students. Seven percent of the enrollment have special education needs and 2% are English language learners. One hundred percent of the student enrollment has Title 1 eligibility, which is higher than similar and City school averages. Attendance, at 90%, is close to the average for similar and City schools.

The school took in grade 7 students for the first time in September 2006 and will include grade 8 beginning in September 2007. Because of this recent extension in age range and increase in the number of students enrolled the school is now accommodated in two buildings, a block apart.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal, who is highly respected by students, staff and parents, is an effective leader of change and improvement.
- An atmosphere of mutual respect and trust permeates the school.
- The school makes considerable use of a broad range of performance data to gain a deep understanding of student learning and achievement.
- Collaborative teams analyze performance data to compare the progress of individual students and groups of students and ensure that overall standards of achievement continue to improve.
- Teams align the mandated curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of learners and provides frequent opportunities to assess their progress.
- The principal makes very good use of resources available to the school to ensure students benefit from a wide range of good learning opportunities to continually improve their achievement.
- Standards of student engagement are very high.
- Very good attendance is celebrated and strongly encouraged.
- Staff are selected on the basis of their capacity to engage with young people and their willingness to continually improve their skills in analyzing student performance, planning, teaching and raising achievement.
- A good range of high quality opportunities through self and peer evaluation, classroom visits, collaborative activities and courses enable teachers to extend their professional skills and meet the needs of students.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to expand the setting of frequently scheduled intermediate goals and plans across all grades and in all subject areas.
- Extend the good partnership already in place between the majority of parents and the school to the benefit of all students.
- Continue to develop the very good skills demonstrated by many teachers in targeting instruction to the ever changing needs of students so that all are continually challenged to achieve their full potential.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

**This is a proficient school with well developed features.**

Students benefit from a very caring learning environment where teachers know students by name and work hard to improve their academic and personal performance. The principal, who leads the school very effectively through a program of change and improvement, shares a commitment to continuously improve each student's personal and academic achievement with all her staff.

Teachers make very good use of a wide range of student performance data to track the progress of individual students, classrooms, grade levels and other groups. Meeting the needs of English language learners, special education students and students in greatest need of improvement are high priorities. The school has developed good systems for analyzing data and using these analyses to diagnose learning needs and next learning steps. The administration, supported by staff, students and parents has very high expectations of student achievement. The principal is ensuring these expectations can be realized by building up the capacity of the staff as a whole to teach well planned, interesting lessons with instruction that is differentiated to the ever changing needs of learners towards the achievement of demanding goals. Work in the classroom is extended through a broad range of after-school activities. A recently introduced science fair enables students to undertake project work in areas of particular interest to them. High levels of student engagement are a feature common in nearly all classrooms and in all grade levels.

### 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 makes consistently good use of a very broad range of regularly updated, objective performance data so that teachers gain a deep understanding of student learning in all subject areas. In addition to regularly scheduled tests across the whole school, recent work is assessed and added to student portfolios each month. Data is analyzed and student progress measured by tracking achievement of individual students, and groups of students, longitudinally over time as they move through the academic year and through successive grade levels. The school uses these measurements determine trends and address needs as students move through the school enabling them to achieve more highly.

Great care is taken to monitor the ever changing progress of students by ethnic groups, special education students, English language learners and other groups of interest to the school to ensure trends are identified at a very early stage. The school rigorously scrutinizes data to identify other individual students or groups of special interest. For example, care is taken to track the performance of boys and girls as separate groups. The school has invested in new reading materials, including non-fiction work, to improve the performance of boys who were identified to be achieving at lower levels than girls in English language arts.

Through collaborative teams, teachers and administration regularly compare the progress of individuals, groups of students, classrooms, grade levels and academic subjects to ensure overall achievement continues to improve. The administration compares the school's performance with similar schools to ensure overall standards of achievement remain high.

**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.**

Interim goals are set and achievement is assessed and analyzed very frequently by collaborative teams in pre-kindergarten to grade 3 reading, writing and mathematics programs. In other areas of the school student achievement is assessed at the start of each academic year and at four subsequent times through the year. Collaborative teams set demanding interim goals for individual students, classrooms and grade levels to achieve at each of these two- to three-monthly assessment events. Interim goals are set for students identified as of particular concern, including early learners, special education students and English language learners. These students' performance is assessed much more frequently so that more immediate action can be taken when the need is identified. Other groups the school has identified as of particular interest include a significant number of children who have considerable parenting responsibilities with regard to their younger siblings. These students, for whom education takes a lower priority than their duties to younger siblings, are consistent low academic performers.

Very high expectations are shared between the principal and her staff and a majority of parents and their children. For these students, academic achievement is generally high and their parents play a significant role in school improvement. They do this through membership of the school leadership team, parent teacher association and their regular attendance at school functions. However, there is a small minority of parents who are less involved in their children's education. This group of students and their parents are of particular concern to the school, which is seeking new ways of involving them.

The school community is driven by its goals and plans to continually improve student achievement. Student successes are celebrated and the school is working hard to ensure all students have high expectations and will benefit from the drive to high achievement.

**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 administration and subject collaborative teams take great care to ensure selected curriculum programs are fully integrated with the mandated curriculum and provide good opportunity for frequent assessment of student achievement in all subject areas. Individual teachers and collaborative teams analyze assessment outcomes to provide a good understanding of the continually changing learning needs of students. The large majority of teachers, all of whom feel accountable for the quality of their work and the progress of their students, make good use of this diagnostic data to adjust curriculum plans, provide

interesting lessons and differentiate their instruction so that all students can work towards their full potential.

The principal takes great pride in using available resources to ensure, as the school grows larger in successive years, class sizes are appropriate, staff are well trained and learning resources regularly upgraded. The school makes very good use of staff to ensure the needs of all students including higher achievers and those at greatest risk of not meeting the standard are met. Students benefit from a good range of interesting activities, both within and outside the school day.

Teachers provide well planned, stimulating learning activities which fully engage students, the substantial majority of whom are self-motivated learners who are eager to achieve as highly as possible. Teachers know students well and are highly responsive to their academic needs. Relationships throughout the school are very good and students are confident that there are many on the staff they could confide in, should the need arise. The principal, staff and parents strongly encourage excellent attendance, which is regularly celebrated through publicly displayed honors boards and special assemblies for students and their parents.

**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 are selected on the basis of their ability to work effectively with children and their capacity to diagnose data to plan interesting lessons that meet the learning needs of all students and raise their achievement. Regular, scheduled activities, including collaborative planning and subject department meetings, feedback from classroom observations and self- and peer-evaluation, extend the professional skills of teachers according to their respective needs. This enables the school to assess student work, analyze performance data to understand student learning, plan their next learning steps and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students with ever greater quality and consistency. New teachers share their recent training and knowledge while more established colleagues share their experience of what works well. Teachers strive to set high expectations for student performance.

The principal and her assistant principals make frequent informal lesson observations and regular formal observations, with detailed feedback. These observations are used to share best practice amongst all staff as well as identify professional development needs. Collaborative teamwork ensures plans and goals are frequently realigned according to the ever changing strengths and needs of individual learners. In these ways, the school is continually improving the quality of instruction and learning, and raising levels of achievement.

The principal is widely respected throughout the school community as a very caring and student focused leader who is managing necessary change and improvement very effectively. Procedures are clear and followed by all. The school runs smoothly. The school makes excellent use of partners in the performing arts to enrich the curriculum, motivate students and raise their achievement. The school has been very successful in its two year participation in the New York State Destination Imagination competition, winning the State final in its first year of entry.

**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 makes very good use of regular interim goals and plans to track student achievement and progress in all subjects. Some practice is exceptional, such as in an early years reading program where assessment is embedded into the course on an almost daily basis. This practice leads to very frequent realignment of goals and plans, resulting in rapid improvements in student achievement. This practice is not of uniformly high quality and needs to be shared across all grade levels and subject areas. However, the school has an excellent understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses and has developed plans to remedy identified deficiencies.

Collaborative teams work very effectively to compare student progress within and across classrooms. They have well established procedures for evaluating the impact of goals and the effectiveness of plans. They use this knowledge to revise plans and goals whenever the need to do so is apparent. Realignment is generally well timed, and is highly developed in pre-kindergarten through grade 3 reading, writing and mathematics. However, the infrequency of assessments in some subject areas and some grade levels leads to delays in realigning plans which may compromise the continuous improvement of student achievement.

The school has well established systems which enable the school leadership team and collaborative groups, including subject teams, to continually review the impact of goals and the effectiveness of plans. Goals and plans are revised accordingly as the school moves through successive phases of change and improvement.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Ida Posner School (PS 165)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.</b>	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			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"> <li>• ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>			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"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>			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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			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.

<b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	