



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Dumont School**

**Public School/Middle School 174**

**574 Dumont Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11207**

**Principal: Ingrid S. Mason**

**Dates of Review: May 14 - 16, 2007**

**Reviewer: Ronnie Young**

# Content of the report

## **Part 1: The School Context**

Information about the school

## **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

## **Part 3: Main Findings**

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

## **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Dumont School is a community school in the East New York section of Brooklyn, serving grades pre-kindergarten through 8. The school currently caters for 509 students, 13% of who have special education needs and 5% are English language learners. The student population is made up of 50% Black, 40% Hispanic and 10% White, Asian and other races. The school receives Title 1 funding with 80.3% eligibility. The attendance rate stands at 90.4% which, although rising, is still below that of City and similar schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Data is used continuously and imaginatively to drive all school activity.
- The performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level and relevant groupings in the school is monitored consistently and continuously to ensure speedy targeted intervention.
- Long-term, short-term and interim targets, containing evaluation tools and impact measurements, are used routinely across the school.
- The principal is highly respected by parents, students and staff and, ably assisted by assistant principals and cabinet, has the capacity to continue effect change.
- Work is differentiated by level in all classes and group work is the norm.
- The introduction of clubs has enriched the curriculum and helped to raise motivation, attendance and self-esteem in students.
- High levels of collaboration across the staff assist thematic approaches to the curriculum and allow the spread of good practice and a supportive environment.
- The strong emphasis across the school on raising achievement and performance of students has resulted in consistently improving results.

### What the school needs to improve

- Explore opportunities for strategic partnership work with community-based organizations that support parents, to improve parent participation.
- Develop strategies for identifying students with specific learning disabilities so further differentiation can take place.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well-developed school.**

The Dumont School, Public School/Middle School 147 is well developed in almost every way. There is an embedded culture of using data for all school activity, and all academic staff are practiced in gathering, analyzing and drawing conclusions on information including attendance, long-term and incremental progress of students and professional development. Goal setting is the norm in the school, for individuals, classes, grades and any other groups in the school, including those broken down by ethnicity and gender. These are accompanied by evaluations and impact measurement. Differentiation can be seen in every classroom with students grouped in a variety of ways. Because of the high levels of collaboration between staff, this differentiation is carried through from one teacher to another and one class to another.

The school has introduced a series of clubs which take place before and after school, to broaden the curriculum. They are chosen according to students' interests and staff expertise, and reinforce social skills and study skills. They range from sporting activities such as football and basketball, through interests such as beading, music and drama to those designed to strengthen school subjects such as book club and keyboarding. Despite the school's best efforts, however, it has still not been able to involve parents as much as it would like, so it is now looking to its community in its endeavors to support participation.

#### **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**

Data is gathered extensively throughout the school, including the state standardized assessments and a number of internal assessments such as Dibels, running records, student observation, regional practice tests, daily informal assessments and reading and writing conferences at formal and informal meetings. Assessment binders are compiled and used routinely by all teaching staff. All students are diagnostically assessed at the beginning of each year for English language arts and mathematics using assessments drawn up by the school from standards material appertaining to that grade. They are then formally monitored at least monthly using standardized tests, although running records and formal and informal conferencing actually means that daily monitoring is the norm.

Data is gathered and analyzed at the level of every student, class and grade and the school also breaks it down into ethnicity, gender and other categories of interest to the school, for example, homeless students. The analysis of formal data is now so sophisticated at the school that variables such as testing conditions and times of day have been taken into account, and changed where possible, if results are anomalous.

The school report card is used to compare the school with similar and city schools, and staff always compare progress year to year, both of each cohort and of the previous three years' cohorts. Particular attention is paid to students at levels 1 and 2, although all

students are expected to progress. Other data used regularly includes attendance data, and teacher activity is also broken down into statistical information, such as professional development activity.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is well developed**

Data is used extensively to plan and set goals. Each year, once data for each grade and the whole school has established the present position, goals are set for improvement. Measurable goals are then set for each class, usually twice yearly, breaking this down into lower, middle and higher-achieving students in each class. After that, comes goal setting for students individually, which is facilitated by the profiling of each student as a result of the diagnostic assessment and the assessment tools. This helps students to progress by becoming more responsible for their own performance. The goals are set collaboratively by grade teams assisted by the reading, literacy and mathematics coaches, the assistant principals and the principal. Students needing academic intervention are assessed more frequently than the others so their goals tend to be more incremental. Some school staff have recently been on professional development for working with children with neuro-diverse conditions such as dyspraxia and Asperger syndrome and, although those children are not necessarily in need of academic intervention, more emphasis will be given to targeted study skills and diversification of teaching approaches in the future, to allow further progress to be made.

Faculty conferences, centered on instruction are also instrumental to collaboration, as is the ‘weekly items’ bulletin which allows staff to know what is happening across the school and deals with administrative matters. Grade staff have three or four common preparation periods per week, which are devoted to instruction and student matters. Lunchtimes are also used for collaborative ventures, such as professional development.

The staff and administration have high expectations for all students, although they are realistic about the non-academic circumstances that impede the progress of some individuals. All students are expected to progress to some degree, and this is accepted by all students. Lack of parent participation is a source of concern to the school, although those parents and care-givers with high levels of involvement have very high expectations for their children. Goals and plans for improving student progress and performance are at the forefront of activity across the school, and the coaches, administration and guidance counselor work tirelessly with teaching staff, students and parents to ensure that goals are achievable yet challenging and understood by all.

**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**

Once data is gathered and analyzed, teachers work diligently to align instruction with the data. Curriculum frameworks are based on State standards, then the needs of students provide customization and differentiation, for example, the current reading program,

“Reading First”, was chosen for its phonemic emphasis which was most needed across the school, and its ability to provide the data appropriate for students’ progress. That instructional decisions are constantly being made based on data is evident in teacher logs, small group activities and extension activities. All teachers are held accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes, and differentiation is evident in classroom activity. Currently, students frequently work in groups with tasks and activities differentiated on ability. Learning style inventories based on multiple intelligences are also being introduced to extend differentiation strategies. As a result, student engagement is high, and enthusiasm for and enjoyment of learning is evident across the school.

Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data in conjunction with focused school plans. An example of this is \$11,000 recently spent on library books based on children’s’ interests and their reading ability. Money is also directed towards incentives for such things as 100% attendance for individuals and classes, and consultants have been hired to support a variety of initiatives such as leadership skills and classroom management. Staffing and scheduling decisions are also driven by data and student needs, for example a paraprofessional was recently hired for a grade 1 class after the data showed students were progressing too slowly and the services of a therapeutic social worker were purchased so students and families in crisis could be helped speedily and within school support services. Staff are reassigned to achieve the best match between student need and teachers’ instructional skills. The school’s aim is to move from teachers being instructors to facilitators of learning, so staff are scheduled in ways that enable optimum ways of learning to be discussed collaboratively with common preparation times. This facilitation is further enhanced by the differentiated learning.

Student attendance is a priority. The homes of absent students are phoned every day with follow-up letters and visits. However, family circumstances and issues such as homelessness affect punctuality and attendance and improvement is quite slow. Incentives are in place for individuals and classes with 100% attendance, such as pizza parties, and next year, individual levels of attendance will be a primary factor in the placement in the club of choice. There are high levels of mutual respect and trust between staff and students, leading to close relationships which facilitate personalized learning needs being fulfilled.

**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**

A number of factors are taken into consideration when selecting staff, with love for children considered the most important. Other desirable attributes include a strong work ethic, high expectations of themselves and their students and the desire to personally learn. Those with little experience of data use must be prepared to learn from colleagues so data continues to drive all activity.

There is professional development in abundance at the school and staff attend external development whenever possible and turnkey the information to other staff. Lunch and learn sessions provide opportunities for peer professional development, and grade meetings often feature development sessions with members of the administration and coaches. Data is almost always in use during the latter, either to provide a starting point for the training, or as the focus of the training, to help teachers become more sophisticated in its use.

The principal visits classes every day and each teacher is observed formally three to five times per year. Effective feedback is always given, although during informal snapshots this may sometimes be verbal. Any teacher giving a lesson deemed to be less than good is quickly observed again to allow them to make improvements which can be noted. Peer observation is the norm at the school and teachers feel totally comfortable visiting each others' classrooms, which they see as professional development and a way of spreading good practice. This also facilitates good planning and evaluation of results, as goals are more transparent and can be addressed by teacher teams who see students in a variety of settings.

The principal is highly respected and she and the assistant principals have great capacity to continue to effect change. Policies and procedures are clear and understood by all so the school runs very smoothly.

The clubs which have been introduced to provide enrichment have helped students to gain self-esteem and confidence. As well as adding interest to the curriculum, they have also enhanced student's skills, both social and academic. All are voluntary and take place before or after school. Other examples of youth development is that given by Educators for Social Responsibility, who gave leadership training to 8th graders to prepare them for the Peer Mediation mentioned earlier, and the Outward Bound Movement who helped to promote expeditionary learning programs into the school. Leadership training has been introduced in the higher grades and this has resulted in the peer mediation initiative, in which older students resolve conflict and inter-personal issues between other students. This has given all students an improved sense of social responsibility and has improved behavior throughout the school.

**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 school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and checkpoints to assess progress. There are two copies of the Comprehensive Education Plans, one which is pristine and acts as a guide, and one which is a working copy with ticks, notes and other symbols showing progress or changes of direction. The Comprehensive Education Plan, written by the school leadership team, is understood and referred to often by teaching staff and parents, as well as the principal. Professional development is routinely evaluated and changes made as a result are monitored. Comparisons of student progress within and across classes and grades are carried out routinely and interim goals and diagnostic assessment are used as a matter of course. The whole school is run in such a way that information is available on every student and activity at any given time. Surveys of teachers and students are commonplace so qualitative data is given consideration as well as quantitative. The school is very flexible in its planning, responding to changes speedily. If, for example, a student scores lower than expected in a test, strategies for intervention are put into effect quickly. Teachers are fully involved in all student changes and, as communication systems in the school are so effective, new goals and targets are quickly put into effect and plans can easily affect those following on.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Dumont School (PS/MS 147)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<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>			<b>X</b>
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>			<b>X</b>
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>			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>

\* 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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<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