



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

St Clair McKelway School

Public School 178

**2163 Dean Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Max Glover

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Reviewer: Terry Turner

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The St Claire McKelway School has an enrollment of 639 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. Ninety-nine per cent of students are eligible for Title 1 funding, which is higher than the average for City schools and for similar schools. Forty-eight are special education students, of whom 18 are taught in self-contained classrooms and 30 in collaborative team teaching groups.

Approximately 85% of the students are Black, 13% Hispanic and 1% Asian. A very small number are from other ethnic groups. Nineteen students are English language learners. The level of attendance is just under 89%, which is slightly below that found in similar schools and City schools.

The school has recently become an Empowerment school. Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school makes good use of the data generated by periodic assessments to identify goals and targets for students and classrooms.
- The school provides good support for those students who are in greatest need.
- The school has established high expectations of students' performance and progress.
- The school makes good of support services and outside agencies to enhance the learning experiences of students.
- Scheduling decisions are adapted flexibly to meet the needs of all students, particularly those considered to be at risk of not meeting the standard.
- A dedicated and hard working staff are committed to improving students' outcomes.
- Staff work well together in teams to share knowledge and information about students' progress.
- The school has a sound program of professional development that is geared to its priorities for improvement.
- Students' achievements are celebrated well through displays of work throughout corridors and classrooms.
- The principal has a good understanding of the quality of instruction based on extensive observations and working alongside teachers.

What the school needs to improve

- Find ways of making better use of the achievement data for specific groups of students.
- Encourage greater parental involvement in the education of students.
- Make greater use of modern technologies to enhance learning and improve outcomes for students.
- Continue to seek further ways of differentiating instruction to challenge all students.
- Build into the school's evaluation process more opportunities to establish how well goals and targets are met and the achievement of students improved.
- Ensure that the school records the work that is taking place and that its procedures are clear, well documented and communicated to all.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal is determined to provide a high quality education for all of the students in the school and works tirelessly towards this end. The school is proficient in its collection of data and makes good use of external assessments to evaluate the performance and progress of students. The staff are dedicated professionals who collaborate well in a variety of teams. Students, particularly those in greatest need, are well supported. The school shares its high expectations with students and parents.

The school provides a sound curriculum and a range of supporting programs. It makes scheduling decisions in the best interests of students. Most instruction actively engages the interest of students in all grades. Professional development is geared to the school's priorities and teachers are increasingly differentiating their instruction, although there is more work to be done on matching work to individual student's needs. The school makes good use of support services and outside bodies but has not found a way to engage more parents in the education of their children.

The school makes good use of its Comprehensive Education Plan to evaluate students' progress, establish whether targets have been achieved and inform the next stage of development.

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 school makes very good use of data generated from external sources, such as the Princeton Review. The principal and coaches constantly look at the data from interim assessments to establish the performance and progress of individual students and classes. Where performance is unacceptable, the teacher is challenged to remedy the situation. Evidence from class-based assessments and subsequent external assessments indicates that teachers are addressing identified problems with a high level of success.

The school makes proficient use of the data relating to English language learners and special education students. It has effective mechanisms to identify those students who are at risk of falling behind or being held over. However, there is little analysis of data on ethnic groups. The school has recently been proactive in supporting a group of grade 4 students, who it judged were making only limited progress. However, the school did not keep detailed records of their subsequent gains in English language arts or mathematics. Neither does the school have an overview of how these students have improved their knowledge, skills and understanding in other subjects.

The school makes good use of external assessments to examine trends over time. Weekly grade meetings are used effectively to consider the outcomes of informal classroom testing and to determine common areas for improvement. The coaches keep a close eye on students' progress in English language arts and mathematics. Some use is made of the annual report to compare the school's overall performance with that of other schools.

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 school's leaders work closely with staff to formulate explicit goals, which are outlined in the Comprehensive Education Plan. Most goals have objectively measurable outcomes, such as specified gains in mandated tests in all subjects. The goals focus appropriately on improving academic performance and progress of English language learners and special education students. However, there is little evidence of how it evaluates more subjective goals, such as greater involvement of parents, or who, apart from the principal, is ultimately responsible for their implementation.

The coaches collaborate well with grade level teachers. For example, 6th grade teachers and the literacy coach made good use of data to identify students who needed support in understanding the main idea of a story. The targeted students made dramatic improvements but were not allowed to proceed to the next level until mastery of this particular skill had been firmly established. The mathematics coach collaborated well with 5th grade teachers to improve the students' scores. Significant increases were achieved after an in-depth item analysis identified deficiencies in certain skills, which were rectified through remedial work and modeling of instruction.

The school deals sensitively with those students in greatest need of improvement. For example, the special education students integrate well in collaborative teaching groups. A number of them, in grades 6 and 7, increased their scores in practice tests after being incorporated into mainstream classes. High expectations are conveyed to students and shared with parents/caregivers. Staff, students and support service personnel have regular discussions about progress towards identified targets. Only a limited number of parents currently engage in a meaningful dialogue with school staff about their child's performance 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.

The school embraces a curriculum that aligns with and implements that which is mandated. There are a number of programs in place to help develop students' reading skills, for example the 100-book challenge. The students in grades 4 and 8 benefit from a supplementary science course, which also provides teachers with additional tools and techniques. The teachers undertake item analyses of some of the Princeton Review and English language learners' test data. This helps class teachers and the academic

intervention services team to focus on particular skills and topics for students. The different programs support the school's high expectations and improvement plans, while generating a good deal of meaningful data through tests and portfolios of work.

The principal meets regularly with teachers to review the progress of their students. The teachers are held accountable for improving instruction and outcomes for students. The teachers plan their lessons to take account of what the data reveal about their students. Most instructional programs actively engage students, although some of the work is repetitive. Instruction is usually differentiated by outcome and rarely by task or process. This results in higher achieving students receiving insufficient challenge.

Although the school has recently made some investment in laptop and palm held computers, there is little evidence of students using such technologies to enhance their learning. The out-of-date equipment in the computer laboratory severely restricts the extent and range of activities that the students undertake.

The school is appropriately staffed to meet the needs of all students. There are many illustrations of scheduling decisions being guided by students' data. The teachers make good use of common planning time. For example, visual and kinesthetic learners benefit from specially designed programs and activities. New teachers gain valuable experience in classroom management by shadowing a veteran teacher for several days. The students in grades 7 and 8 made better progress in mathematics after an extra group was created.

Staff generally know their students well and respond to their academic needs. However, there are a few examples of minor inconsistencies in dealing with individual and whole-class behavioral issues. Students' attendance is a high priority for the school and absences are swiftly followed up.

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 school hires staff based on their commitment to provide a high quality education for all students. Leaders and staff have high expectations for students' performance. Comparisons in student's achievements within and across classes result in teachers and students being set revised targets by the principal. The literacy and mathematics coaches support the teachers well in meeting these targets.

The school's priorities and instructional needs are the basis for professional development... Demonstration lessons have enabled some teachers to improve their pedagogy although differentiated instruction is not yet embedded in the school culture. The teachers now have a better understanding of how to analyze data but not how to make best use of the various interpretations. Teachers in grades 1 to 3 make effective use of palm computers to obtain immediate feedback on students' progress.

The principal and assistant principals frequently observe teachers, formally and informally. They provide sound strategies for improving instruction. The teachers benefit from inter-class visitations and the subsequent constructive feedback that they receive. Planning takes place in teams and outcomes of meetings are appropriately shared with other colleagues. The school leaders' do not always communicate intentions clearly to staff.

The school has little documentation to clarify procedures and support much of the good work that takes place.

Support services align well with academic goals, especially for the support offered during the school day. The school has developed successful partnerships with several community-based organizations and centers that provide recreational programs, for example, the Brooklyn Center for Urban Environment.

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 Comprehensive Education Plan provides the school with a good platform to assess progress in meeting goals and targets. The criteria for success are clear. The school has been very creative in devising a range of strategies to engage students' interests. For example, students who have become part of an expanding school music band have improved their attendance as well as their academic performance. The school also sensibly revises plans that are clearly not working as for instance, when it was found that teachers were not making sufficient use of an external input on how to develop the creative arts in classrooms.

The school makes regular diagnostic assessments of students' learning. These enable teachers to recalibrate goals, particularly for English language arts and mathematics. The school makes informative comparisons of students' progress within and across classrooms. Students benefit from the intervention strategies, which the school puts in place if they are judged by teachers to be at risk of falling behind.

Records of progress and performance in State tests are well documented. However, records of students' gains in knowledge, skills and understanding on a day-by-day basis are documented less well. Plans are revised but not with the frequency and regularity that they might be.

Each plan's outcome informs successive phases of goal setting. However, there are few opportunities to establish at regular intervals the school's progress towards goals and targets. There is a lack of clear accountability for each element of the plan, although school leaders do use the data they collect to show whether an initiative is making a difference to students' achievements. The school revises plans at the end of the year, once State test data is available.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: St Claire McKelway School (PS178)	∅	✓	+
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	