



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Homewood Public School

Public School 180

**5601 16th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11204**

Principal: Gary Williams

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Reviewer: Barbara Kwiecinski

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

This elementary school has 628 students on roll. In 2006 the school admitted grade 6 students for the first time and now serves students from pre-kindergarten to grade 6. The majority of the learners are general education students, 19% of students are English language learners and 12% are special education students. The school does not receive Title 1 funding.

The ethnic make up of the students is 49.9% White, 1.6% Black, 14.0% Hispanic, and 34.5% Asian and others.

The principal of the school is new this academic year, as is the assistant principal. The teachers are well qualified, 89.7% having Masters Degree or higher and 76.9% of the teachers have been at the school for more than two years.

The school has a Delta gifted program offering an enriched curriculum and collaborative team teaching classes from pre-kindergarten through to grade 6.

Attendance at the school is higher than is normally found in New York City schools, averaging just below 94% last year.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- In a short space of time the principal has won the respect of staff, parents and students and operates an open door policy.
- The principal has a clear vision of how to move the school forward to effect change and places great emphasis on academic excellence.
- The principal has improved communications between staff, parents and students, conveying high expectations and clear goals.
- The principal is committed to student empowerment and the 'students educationally enriched as learning leaders' program is an exciting initiative to achieve this.
- The principal empowers staff and they are eager to take on extra responsibilities to enhance the curriculum.
- The school runs effectively and safely and staff respond to students' personal as well as academic needs.
- Instructional programs engage students and the emphasis on arts to complement the academic curriculum, is further motivating students.
- The caring school culture encourages high attendance and students want to learn, respect each other and behave well.
- Parental support is good and the senior leadership team is involved in decision making and curriculum planning.

What the school needs to improve

- Disaggregate data further to understand the performance and progress of all student groups.
- Extend and capitalize upon the ongoing informal lesson observations carried out by the principal.
- Further differentiate teacher instruction and planning to meet all student needs and learning styles.
- Further use data related to individual students to inform planning and to set performance targets.
- Formalize cabinet strategic planning and take minutes at all meetings to ensure continuity and progress towards goals.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

In the short time that the principal has been in the school he has created an open, positive and happy working atmosphere for staff, students and parents. They speak very positively about him, welcome his 'open door' policy and respond to his encouragement and support. The principal provides sensitive and purposeful leadership. Staff understand his shared vision for moving the school forward through seeing students as leading learners and by placing an emphasis on arts and academic excellence. The principal is excited by his new challenges and sees the school as his 'gift'. The principal recognizes the need to develop the role and empower the newly appointed assistant principal through the delegation of some of his responsibilities.

Staff are supportive of each other and there is a mutual respect between staff and students. This results in a purposeful working atmosphere. All grade level teachers plan together and student performance is improving.

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 uses a wide range of assessments and tests as well as informal assessments and teacher observations of students. This provides the faculty with a picture of what is happening at student, classroom, grade and subject level. Teachers are working hard, and are constantly striving to improve the levels of achievement of their students. The school generates data on the progress of some groups of students and intends to extend this. The school makes data comparisons year on year and tracks individual student progress. Results of similar and City schools are checked to compare performance.

The principal, assistant principal and coach are working together to ensure that all teachers and the school leadership team have access to a comprehensive range of information and are able to interpret the data accurately.

The progress of English language learners and special education students is monitored so that interventions and specific programs can be designed to meet their individual needs.

The percentage of students meeting the standards in all tested grades is above similar schools and above City averages. The number of students gaining levels 3 and 4 overall has increased year on year and the morning tutorials are now providing support for the higher functioning students as the analysis of data showed that high achieving students should do even better. The principal has recognized that the math results for the higher grades are uneven so he is encouraging teachers to differentiate planning and begin to address the needs of all students.

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 has established organizational structures that encourage collaborative working at grade and faculty level. The cabinet uses the Comprehensive Education Plan to create school wide programs with measurable goals. Grade and faculty conferences are held once a month. These structures are complemented by mutual staff support, which has been strengthened since the appointment of the new principal. There is trust between staff; teachers visit each other’s classrooms and reflect on their practice and make changes to ensure that goals are met.

The math coach plays a valuable role in raising levels of achievement and gives support across the school. This is achieved through sharing data analysis, giving support in lessons and leading meetings where student progress is compared. The school has rightly identified the need for the appointment of a literacy coach who will work in tandem with the math coach.

The school has been successful in establishing consistently high expectations across grades and subjects and the administration is working hard to ensure that all teachers plan to reflect the needs of individuals. All members of the school community are now involved in individual goal setting, to accelerate students’ learning.

The needs of lower functioning students are well catered for and they receive extra support in the thirty seven and a half minute program at the end of each school day. Within this program of support, teacher to student ratios are very high and student progress is improving.

The school communicates clearly with parents and caregivers. In addition to formal communications which inform parents and caregivers of student performance, the principal operates an ‘open door’ policy and parents feel comfortable to discuss any aspect of student performance or personal issues. Parents appreciate the ready access they have to all staff and the timeliness with which teachers let them know of any concerns. The senior leadership team has developed an effective web site and through this communication channel parents and caregivers are kept up to date with school events and learn how they can support their children’s progress.

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

This area of the school’s work is proficient with some well developed features.

Staff empowerment is high on the principal’s agenda and he is very keen to support all initiatives particularly those that extend the mandated curriculum. The importance of

language is addressed and each morning all students extend their French vocabulary by listening to words and their translations.

Teachers are aware of the need to further differentiate instruction. The principal sees the 'students educationally enriched as learning leaders', program as one way to develop this. He sets high standards, has imaginative ideas and as a consequence teachers respond. The program engages students as active participants in the learning process and, through a discovery approach, fosters leadership qualities and cooperative learning. This is engaging teachers and consequently enabling them to reflect on their teaching styles, planning and impact on student learning.

Students behave well in class and remain on task. Post it notes are used positively to suggest to students how their work could improve. Students are polite and courteous and eager to talk about the school. They feel comfortable to ask teachers for help and feel well supported in their studies.

Budgeting decisions are beginning to be driven by data analysis. The new appointment of a literacy coach and the decision to appoint additional support staff rather than another assistant principal is one example of this.

The emphasis the school places on arts, academic excellence and community collaboration further supports student engagement. Students are eager to take part in dramatic productions and enjoy lessons where there is active participation. The quality of staff and student relationships transfers into a warm and caring community where students feel supported by teachers, the deans and senior staff. Students feel secure and confident in school.

The positive attitudes in the school help to foster good attendance; presently this is higher than the average for city schools and even higher than that of similar schools. The school values parental support and has many examples to indicate that where parents are supportive, intervention strategies have had the greatest effect.

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 with well developed features.

The positive tone that has been set by the principal since his appointment has been successful in gaining the support of staff, students and parents. Teachers have appreciated the recognition by the principal of their efforts in adapting their planning to give extra dimensions to the curriculum. They welcome the frequent informal observations by the principal, which complement the formal observations. The principal is going to refine this approach and provide more opportunities for observations by the assistant principal and formalize the feedback process.

Everybody interviewed spoke consistently, describing the principal as being a constant presence whose door was always open, ready to praise where appropriate but not afraid to take difficult decisions, particularly those related to health and safety.

The cabinet meets regularly and although the agendas are set by the principal there is room for the cabinet to add additional items. The debates are healthy and everyone's

opinion is listened to. There is an expectation by the principal that agenda outcomes are addressed before the next meeting; however no formal minutes are taken.

Staff appointments are based on the ability of the individual to achieve high student performance and the principal looks for staff with 'energy and a commitment to children'.

Professional development is now aligned to the school's goals and priorities for improvement; this ensures that everyone understands the direction in which the school is going. The principal appreciates the need to train new teachers in analyzing data in order to use it effectively to drive instruction. The close working relationships and opportunities for planning for teachers at grade level is welcomed and supportive.

Partnerships with outside bodies are developing, including 'being a principal for the day'. The principal is very proactive and has sought support from many partners, providing resources which will help students achieve their academic goals.

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.

This is a school where all staff have a strong focus on supporting students and who try hard to respond the needs of the individual. Many intervention programs are in place and the evaluation of these programs and their effectiveness is developing. Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms are also developing and the open atmosphere and the willingness of staff to share good practice is helping these processes to become further embedded. Grade and faculty meetings take place monthly and plans are revised and modified as appropriate. Plans are now being further refined and a greater emphasis made on differentiated planning to reflect individual student need alongside the modification of plans to evaluate the progress towards interim and final goals.

A significant element in the success of the school is that it has encouraged parents to become involved in the school's development as well as that of their children. The parents believe that they are listened to and, as a result, the senior leadership team is very effective and is actively involved in curriculum planning, decisions on buildings and graduation protocols.

The principal has a clear vision as to what he wants to achieve and has the drive and determination, linked with the support of his staff to implement this. In the short space of time the principal has been in post, he has established a very positive, forward looking culture within the school which will help the learning journey and improve academic outcome further.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Homewood Public School (PS 180)	∅	✓	+
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	