



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Manhattan Beach School**

**Public School 195**

**131 Irwin Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11235**

**Principal: Arthur Foreman**

**Dates of review: September 25 - 27, 2006**

**Reviewer: Andy McClean**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The school is located close to Coney Island with nearly 400 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. It is surrounded by well-established housing overlooking the local marina. Fifty percent of students have Russian as their home language and treasure their European heritage.

As a result of the principal's vision and leadership with the help of very supportive staff the school has made strong academic progress within the last three years. The school has performed successfully over recent years with the result that achievement is significantly better than similar schools. While attendance levels are below the City average the school makes every effort to ensure the students understand the importance of regular attendance.

The school makes great efforts to communicate with parents to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to receive the best possible education. As a result, the school benefits from strong parental support and interest in their children's learning. They have partnerships with Columbia Teachers' College as well as strong links with a number of local schools. It is a very popular school with a stable staff.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The deeply reflective principal has strategic vision and the ability to communicate challenging goals to staff and students.
- A passion for learning is very well communicated to all students, inspiring good learning habits.
- The staff is led by highly visible and approachable leaders.
- There is a visually stimulating environment that rich in literacy and numeracy.
- There is a strong emphasis upon a balanced curriculum, where all students' interests are addressed with particular opportunities in the creative arts.
- The encouragement of positive attitudes leads to the exemplary behavior of all students.
- The school has created a true sense of partnership with parents where families are regularly informed of their children's progress and learning areas they need to develop.

### What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that regular feedback becomes a common element in teaching, specifically, to use the identification of mistakes as opportunities to shape future planning and instruction.
- Develop the teachers' use of technology as a tool to support instruction and students' learning.
- Systematically evaluate the goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan to ensure that it is well focused on instruction and learning actions in order to raise standards and improve students' progress.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

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

As a result of thoughtful and determined leadership, based upon sharing aims with staff, students and parents, the school has high expectations and high achievement. The school's use of expressive arts is well developed and used to enhance a strong core curriculum with an emphasis upon the teaching literacy and mathematics. The whole culture of the school is energetic and challenging.

### 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.**

With 50% of all students speaking Russian at home, a key feature of the school's use of data is to identify those students at the early stages as English language learners. The school quickly identifies students who are at the early stages of learning English and informs all teachers.

Systems for the collection and use of data to guide programs of instruction are well established. From the outcomes of all testing and assessments, the principal and senior staff communicate to teachers how instructional programs need to be planned, delivered and assessed. The Wilson Reading program and the analysis of the data in the Grow Report contribute greatly to improving achievement. As a result, standards in English language arts, mathematics and science are high when compared with similar schools: these results have been maintained over a number of years. A particular concentration upon English language learners and special education students has resulted in these groups making significant progress in their time in school. Particularly evident is the progress made by students who arrive in school speaking no English. Within short periods, use of the data gathered from early assessments results in their full integration.

Staff regularly discuss overall trends identified from tests which is then translated into modifications to instructional programs. An example of this is the introduction of the Everyday Mathematics program to improve standards of basic numeracy skills in grades 1 and 2. This was identified as an area for development and from its use, students' command of basic skills has improved as has their use of these skills in problem-solving.

**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.**

Students' progress in recent years shows the impact of clear strategic thinking by the principal and the administration. This has been particularly evident in the achievement of English language learners and special education students, as well as those students who perform very well. From detailed and thoughtful analysis of test results and trends, specific curriculum goals are set, particularly in reading and writing. All staff are informed of how data is being used to draw conclusions, define goals and plan short term learning objectives.

Special education students are identified at an early stage. Conferencing between specialist teachers and class teachers results in well-targeted support programs for individuals and student groups. This has been particularly successful with improvement in basic reading skills. The same applies to the many students who arrive from Eastern Europe unable to speak English. Teachers and support staff identify these barriers to learning immediately and organize special support programs and measure the progress of such students regularly. Teachers keep in regular touch with parents about their child's progress and needs.

Very good lines of communication exist with parents, thanks to the school's willingness to reach out into the community. The employment of Russian-speaking staff enables parents to know what their children's program of instruction will be and how they can help. From very high expectation of performance and behavior, standards of work are high. Students receive feedback on their performance regularly. Increased dialogue about individual students' assessments for learning is a proficient feature which the school recognizes for further development.

**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 school has made recent determined efforts to use teachers' skills, the efforts of parents and the use of data to provide a creative, broad and balanced curriculum. This has resulted in a great many examples of innovative practice. The teaching staff feel empowered to challenge all students. A specific example is the teaching of ballroom dancing to grade 5 students. This was introduced to enhance social skills and self-esteem and has also improved their abilities to understand and listen to instructions. Their ability to work in teams has improved, as have their higher-order thinking skills. They improve their own performance through critical analysis of the work of their peers. A program like this has enhanced the more fundamental instruction of core subjects to advance standards in those areas. All students receive common instruction of a challenging nature to develop the most important skills of reading, writing and mathematics through real life examples.

From collaborative planning, peer observations, professional development on a school-wide scale and lesson observations by administrators, teachers have a clear understanding of what methods of instruction are to be followed in school. To improve upon this, the principal actively encourages innovative teaching, as long as it is based on the evidence from student data and will improve their progress. So, for example, the use of art as a medium to teach mathematics is seen in classes throughout the school.

The practice of celebrating students' work through the use of portfolios, digital photos and other displays enable parents and visitors to view students' progress. All students enjoy their work and play and have a thirst for improvement engendered by some inspirational teaching and the drive of the principal.

The principal is aware of the need to improve attendance, which is reduced by a small number of students whose families take them on extended holidays to Europe in school time. Through direct communication with parents and the support of the parent teacher association all students are encouraged to reach a goal of full attendance. Data is well used to maintain a regular check upon this, particularly the minority of students absent on long term-time holidays. The school makes every effort to ensure full attendance.

**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.**

The principal is instrumental in providing deeply reflective leadership and strategic direction to the school. He is a very well respected figure and is highly visible and approachable throughout the school day. There is a constructive relationship with the assistant principal through regular conferencing on how data is interpreted and used, how staff are selected and deployed, how best practice is identified and used in school. Areas of difficulty are addressed and dealt with effectively. This healthy debate on methods of instruction and the ultimate goals of the school is extended to include teachers, support staff and parents.

As a result of classroom observations, analysis of students' work and data analysis, leaders make formal plans to address the school's major challenges. Foremost in these plans is the evolution of successful instructional models to improve results. An example can be seen in the teaching of science with hands-on experiences, where all students are expected to question and explain their scientific reasoning.

Through the principal's determined directing, instructional programs are regularly analyzed and discussed. Teachers plan and teach together systematically. Those from different grades discuss the teaching of others to look for customization of approach, as with Everyday Mathematics instruction in grades 1 and 2. Use of outside help is seen in school with the Columbia Teachers' College and neighboring schools joining in the discussion about best practice and its identification.

The impact of this is a highly articulate and evaluative instructional team, who always seek to improve upon current standards. Professional development is a strongly supportive feature in maintaining teachers' confidence and momentum. The development of expertise in using technology to support instruction and learning has been identified as an area for development in the very near future.

**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.**

School standards, when compared with similar schools, are high, and have been so for a number of years. This does not mean that the school is complacent. The principal is acutely aware of the need to analyze data regularly, seeking to identify those areas of success and those areas in need of development.

However, there are not enough opportunities for the school to step back and reflect more frequently upon recent successes, current progress and future challenges. Greater critical evaluation of the impact of instructional programs in English language arts and mathematics upon student learning is needed to enhance the school's ability to monitor and revise its improvement plans. Currently, the school lacks clear evaluation of its goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan.

The principal gives a truly professional lead to the educational direction of the school even when working with a reduced budget. Successful strategies are highlighted, analyzed by all staff and developed. Students love their school and respect their teachers. There is an awareness of the need to make even greater academic progress. Plans to address this are detailed and there is a willingness to carry them out.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Manhattan Beach School (PS 195)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</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>			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>			
<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