



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Vince Lombardi School

Public School 204

**8101 15 Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11228**

Principal: Marie Reilly

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Reviewer: Cheryl Baker

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Vince Lombardi School, P.S. 204, is a pre-k through grade 5 school serving 985 students. Special education students account for approximately 8% of the population while English language learners represent a further 11%. Fifty-one percent of the students are White, 37% are Asian, 11% are Hispanic and approximately 1% is Black. The school is Title I eligible.

Over the period 2003-2006, students at P.S. 204 have consistently increased, year on year, the percentage of students scoring at levels three and four in English language arts, mathematics and science on State and City tests at all tested grades, each year. In addition, students at P.S. 204 consistently score higher than most similar schools and city schools. Special education students and English language learners perform better than their counterparts at similar and city schools as measured by State and City tests. Attendance at Vince Lombardi is routinely above 95%. Suspensions and police incidents are virtually non-existent at the school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Provides explicit expectations for the use of data to understand the needs of individual students.
- Supports teachers in developing skills related to the implementation of the mandated curricula, especially English language arts.
- Sets explicit targets for the delivery of concepts embodied in standards-based curricula in all academic disciplines.
- Sets clear procedures to ensure that the school runs smoothly.
- Monitors instruction with regularity.
- Fosters an environment that welcomes parents and integrates them into the life of the school.
- Provides an array of support services and programs to meet the needs of all students.
- Engenders collaborative problem solving and empowers teachers to share in the leadership and decision making in the school.
- Demonstrates annual increases in student performance as measured by State and City tests.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to provide professional development in the analysis of statistical and anecdotal data so that teachers can further refine their use of this data.
- Provide additional training in techniques for differentiating instruction so that teachers can even more effectively meet the individual needs of students.
- Continue to plan for the integration of community based organizations to provide additional support for the academic program and to further expand students' extracurricular options.
- Increase translations and translators to improve access for non-English speaking families.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

The school enjoys a strong reputation in the community and parents often go to great lengths to enroll their students at P.S.204. The principal, in her fourth year of leadership, has set clear expectations for the institution of standards-based instruction using the mandated curricula and has supported this initiative with professional development and consistent support for teacher's efforts. In addition to the annual increases students demonstrate on State and City tests, the school has succeeded in closing the achievement gap among students in its sub-group populations. This accomplishment received recognition in Standard & Poor's SchoolMatters, a report identifying schools in New York that significantly narrowed the achievement gap in 2003-2004 and 2004-2005.

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school's leaders and faculty routinely gather data to inform their understanding of what students know and are able to do. In the early grades the school administers the early childhood literacy assessment system, the developmental reading assessment, the writing and reading assessment portfolio and analyses information gleaned from running records and conference notes to understand students' learning needs. In the upper grades the school analyses data from State and City tests, the Princeton Review and student performance on classroom assessments. In 2005-2006, the school instituted the requirement that all teachers create instructional portfolios containing samples of student work and assessments to sharpen their knowledge of student's learning and provide a basis for individualizing instruction. The portfolios also provide information to administrators regarding the progress of students within classrooms and across grade levels. These moves have been very effective and have had a further positive impact on standards of achievement.

The school gathers information about English language learners through home language surveys. It tests the students to assess their language proficiency and designs programs to meet individual needs. Special education students are identified and assessed according to regulations and placed in the least restrictive instructional settings that best meet their needs. Their progress is monitored according to their individual education plans. As a result the students concerned make good progress and out-perform their counterparts in similar and City wide schools as reported by the 2004-2005 Annual School Report. The school carefully monitors the progress of its ethnic and economic subgroups.

In order to support students needing academic intervention services, the school has developed a good network of providers and interventions for students identified within the larger context of the pupil personnel team. The progress of students identified for these services is measured and monitored by the service providers through an individually designed program. Academic intervention teachers keep binders which contain evidence of student progress. Reading recovery and Wilson reading providers assess and record

progress for each instructional session. This evidence is shared with the classroom teacher on a regular basis. The school is keenly aware of its progress since 2003, the year that the current administration was appointed. Similarly, the school tracks its progress relative to neighboring elementary schools and uses the data in the annual school report to gain information about its progress with regard to similar schools. Portfolios and inter-visitations inform comparisons among students, classrooms, grade levels and academic subject areas.

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.

The School Leadership Team reviews performance data and surveys to formulate the Comprehensive Education Plan that sets forth annual goals for improvement in all of the school’s programs. The school shares the executive summary of the plan with the school community and uses these goals to drive the overall direction of improvement steps. The principal’s performance review identifies goals in support of the Comprehensive Education Plan. These goals include three progress checkpoints during the academic year. Curriculum maps identifying monthly expectations for topical coverage serve to guide the instruction in the tested areas and sharpen the focus on State standards. Goals and plans for improved achievement of students identified for English language support, special education, academic intervention or other specialized service are evidenced in the school. Regular assessment of the students’ progress in these programs informs the revision of plans or changes to intervention strategies when required. The school provides numerous programs, including push-in, pull-out, before and after school programs, small group and individualized support, to address the needs of students in greatest need of improvement.

High expectations for student performance are expressed through the school’s mission and its culture which celebrates achievement. Students are recognized for their achievement and attendance through awards assemblies, student-of-month recognition, and special events with the principal. Parents are welcome in the school and their presence is a regular feature during the school day. They describe an atmosphere of openness and support for their children and are contacted at the first indication of any problem. Student progress is formally reported to parents at least three times per year. For students receiving academic intervention services, progress is reported monthly. In order to increase participation in the life of the school and ensure understanding of life in school the school is increasing the translation of documents and providing better access to translators at school sponsored parent training sessions.

The school’s stakeholders; administrators, teachers and parents demonstrate an awareness of the direction of improvement goals set forth in the Comprehensive Education Plan as well as the principal’s goals for the school and, in a general way, these inform the activity of all of the members of the school community.

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's curriculum is aligned appropriately with the State standards and instruction is guided by monthly curriculum maps developed in 2006 to ensure horizontal and vertical alignment of the standards-based curriculum in all content areas. Balanced literacy components continue to be added to instruction in English language arts. Everyday Math provides the foundation for mathematics instruction. Literacy and mathematics coaches support the delivery of instruction in their respective disciplines. Teachers are increasingly encouraged to utilize the information they have about individual student learning needs to differentiate instruction. At present, differentiation in the school is largely characterized by program and at the classroom level, by varying large group, small group and paired instruction. Individualization for each child remains a goal. Active engagement is observable in most, but not all lessons.

Teachers are held accountable for improving instruction and through the routine monitoring of instruction by administrators and coaches. The student portfolios, analysis of classroom and grade level performance on State and local assessments, and reviews of teachers' report card grades are some of the data the administration use to hold teachers accountable for improving student outcomes. Teachers whose performance warrants improvement are provided with professional development support and coaching.

Budget, staffing and scheduling decisions are driven by the components of the Comprehensive Education Plan which is based upon the needs revealed by student data. The plan is amended if circumstances cause an alteration in expenditures, such as when the institution of the mandated 37.5 minutes of extended day instruction caused a diversion of funds from the after school program to reading materials for the regular classrooms. Further, when student scores revealed that a reading teacher was no longer needed at the upper grades, funding for staffing was shifted to an intervention program for students at the primary grades. In order to maintain the instructional benefits of the after school program, the extended day was scheduled as a before school program in the 2006-2007 school year.

Students are proud of their school and like their teachers and the principal. They feel supported and cared for by all of the adults in the building and are aware of support personnel who are available for consultation if necessary. The schools population is very stable and students commonly spend their entire elementary career at P.S. 204. They enjoy coming to school. Attendance is routinely above 95% and instances of absence or tardiness are addressed effectively.

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 recognized as the instructional leader of the school and, in collaboration with her fellow teachers and administrators, has the capacity to continue to move the school forward. She also has earned the respect of parents. The school is highly organized and runs smoothly. The building is well cared for and halls and classrooms display colorful and informative examples of student work.

The principal has had the opportunity to hire approximately one half of the instructional staff and one of the two assistant principals. Criteria for employment include training, experience, familiarity with the mandated curriculum and willingness to work hard to improve student achievement. Capacity to utilize data is emphasized less; however, it is an expectation for the delivery of instruction. She and her assistants visit classrooms on a

daily basis, perform formal evaluations as required by contract and routinely provide feedback and encouragement to teachers as they implement new methods and curricula. Teachers feel supported as they add to their instructional repertoires and routinely visit colleagues' classrooms to observe instruction and share successful practices.

Professional development decisions are made by the cabinet and are based upon needs identified through analysis of student data, observations of instruction, training needed to deliver the mandated curriculum, and needs identified by teachers. For example, weakness in student writing drove the decision to focus more deliberately on training teachers in the writing component of the balanced literacy approach. Teachers were provided with opportunities to learn how to access student data from the New York State testing and accountability reporting tool as well as results from the Princeton Review. Training in techniques for the differentiation of instruction remains a goal.

Grade level conferences are supported by common planning time and are a primary source of professional development and collegial decision making. Teachers and administrators regularly turn-key information from workshops and conferences to ensure maximum impact. Grade level teams and other groups, such as the portfolio development committee, offer teachers with good opportunities to share decisions aimed at improving the overall functioning of the school. The school does not currently have formal alliances with youth development and support services. However, communication with potential providers is underway and the school hopes to solidify plans for programs to begin soon.

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.

While the school does make good use of the Comprehensive Education Plan as a general guide for annual school improvement, it lacks frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented, with the exception of goals for English language learners. The principal's annual performance goals do express three general benchmarks for success during the school year but are not linked to diagnostic assessments. These plans, while they are able to be revised, are generally static in nature as they provide guidance over an academic year. Thus, they are not characterized by the agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources.

On the other hand, comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms based on observation, student portfolio contents and records of student performance are routinely used to assess the success of instruction as demonstrated by student learning. Results of these embedded monitoring practices inform, for example, judgments regarding the effectiveness of professional development or the referral of students for academic intervention or other services. Information generated by Princeton review results, running records, conferencing notes, the developmental reading assessment, and other sources of information embedded in the mandated curriculum and supplemental programs is used to track student progress towards goals in their academic intervention, special education or English language learner plans. Goals or interventions are adjusted as informed by the data. Increasingly, teachers are learning to utilize the analysis of student work included in portfolios to assess student understanding and adjust instruction in an individual manner.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Vince Lombardi School (P.S.204)	∅	✓	+
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	