



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Elizabeth Leary School

Public/Middle School 207

**4011 Fillmore Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11234**

Principal: Ms Mary Bosco

Dates of review: October 4 - 6 2006

Reviewer: Ms Anne Munt-Davies

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Background information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

In September 2006, Public School 207 changed its designation from an elementary school to become one from kindergarten through 8. The middle school section will grow each year as students graduate from the elementary to the middle school. This academic year, the former grade 5 class moved up to become the first grade 6 class in the new school. To mark this change the middle school will become known as The Fillmore Academy.

At the same time, in September 2006, the Early Childhood Center re-opened in a separate building a short distance by car from the main building. This facility has recently been renovated to provide an environment suited to the needs of young children. Although they are in separate buildings, the staff will be managed by the same administration and be part of Elizabeth Leary.

Of the 818 students enrolled 8.5% are special education students and 3% are English language learners. The majority of students, 48%, are White, 27.26% Black, 13.86% Hispanic and 10.21% are Asian. Fewer students than average (37.2%) are Title 1 eligible. Attendance is 94.7% which is higher than most other City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has set a high standard of professionalism and commitment which is evident throughout the work of the school.
- There is a well-developed system for collecting and analyzing student data and using it to guide decision-making.
- The school is reflective with detailed, well-structured systems to assess what it does well and what is less effective.
- This is a high performing school that recognizes its successes, but is constantly striving to do even better.
- Teachers collaborate well, sharing what works and using their learning to benefit each other and, most importantly, their students.
- Relationships in the school are excellent and based on a climate of mutual respect among staff and students which enables high levels of collaborative working.
- There is a strong and effective parent teacher association that works very effectively to support the needs of the school and promote it within the wider community.
- The culture of care is responsive to individual need and supports students and staff very effectively.
- The administration is adept at managing major change in calm and well-focused way, which enables students to feel secure and ready to learn.

What the school needs to improve

- Make even better use of detailed assessment data to set goals for learning.
- Use the information gathered from assessments to involve students in setting next steps for improvement, so that they grow to take greater responsibility for their own learning.
- Devise ways of ensuring that homework is linked to the goals set for each student and consider ways in which students, parents and teachers can work more effectively together to attain goals and support students' independence.
- Build on and utilize the existing assessment systems so that what is to be taught and how it is to be taught are more closely and consistently aligned with the needs and learning styles of all students.
- Build on the present systems of curriculum planning and mapping to develop a curriculum for this growing school, ensuring that the gains made in core subjects are sustained in the middle school years by careful planning and monitoring of work.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

This is a school that places an equal emphasis on nurture for individuals alongside academic success. There are carefully constructed systems and structures underpinning the work of the school, complemented by the culture of care and warmth for individuals. Students succeed in this supportive environment and staff work well together as a team to ensure that high standards are maintained in all aspects of the school's work.

The school is in a time of transition as it grows into one that serves students from kindergarten through grade 8 and the youngest children moved to an Early Childhood Center in a renovated site nearby. Despite this, it remains calm and well-focused on its goal of high achievement for all.

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

On entry to the school and to each grade students are assessed in order to ascertain what they know, understand and can do. This information is used to benchmark achievement, monitor progress and establish a needs assessment. There is evidence of the careful monitoring of progress and the detailed needs assessments in which data on each child is collected and used to ascertain next steps for teaching and interventions. Data is used effectively to monitor the progress of individuals and particular groups. Teachers and the academic intervention services team work together very effectively to use data to plan interventions and support when a particular need has been identified. The administration also carefully monitors the progress of groups, grades, classes and individuals. The information generated from data is used effectively by the administration, teachers and teams. As a direct result, there is a depth to the uses of data which impacts on improved results at all levels.

Partly as a result of the considered use of data, achievement outcomes are good and students perform well in State tests. In spring 2005, for example, 81.2% of students scored levels 3 and 4 in English language arts. The indicators showed that data had been used consistently to respond to students' needs and to inform teachers' planning. However, when test results show a decline the administration is quick to analyze the results, examine the possible factors contributing to the decline and take appropriate action to remediate.

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 with well-developed features.

There are aspects of these criteria which are very well-developed; however, there are also areas for further development. Teachers' collaboration is a strength. Over time the principal and the administration team have worked to create a culture of collaborative practice which is now embedded throughout the school. There is a well-established expectation that teachers work together to plan and to discuss what is working well and what needs revision. This is not only very supportive but is also effective in building and maintaining sustainability and high standards.

Data is well used to set and review goals for individual students, and to allocate additional resources and services to those students most in need of additional support. High expectations are shared with both students and their parents and caregivers. Parents are also well supported in their endeavors to be good educators. Parents and teachers talk of the good communication and the strength of the relationships which enable good working partnerships. Parents have been instrumental in acting as a driving force in the community to make major organizational changes.

However, students are not sufficiently engaged in setting individual goals for improvement. Now that the school is growing to become a kindergarten through grade 8 school and the students are being prepared for high school and college life, they increasingly need opportunities to set their own challenging goals and acquire the independent learning skills to know how to achieve these goals.

Homework is also an area where students are not actively involved in extending themselves and the work they undertake. The relevance of homework and its relationship to work in class as well as goal setting is an aspect of the school's work that has not been given sufficient attention.

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 selected the curriculum to align with the needs of students and the mandated curriculum. There is a successful balance in the way the curriculum is designed and implemented. For example, the new Early Childhood Center has been designed and resourced for the needs of the youngest students and there is a clearly defined approach to meeting the young children's learning needs, including their social and emotional needs. Throughout the school there is evidence of a child-centered approach to learning and achievement; the desire for high standards of achievement do not contradict the culture of care. This is a school where nurture is central to achievement for all. Changes in staffing and the changing nature of the school as it grows are challenges which the school recognizes will have an impact, but the strong focus on the needs of the child are powerful elements for maintaining stability and creating success.

The good systems presently in place for aligning the curriculum to the needs of the students in the elementary school are evident. What is yet to be developed is a curriculum plan which maps the cross curricular development of core subject areas. Sustaining the

gains made by the students as they pass through the elementary school, especially in literacy and mathematics, is an important priority for the administration and staff and the development of a sound, well-differentiated curriculum map suited to the needs of a kindergarten through 8 school is a next step in ensuring that the growth is sustained.

Related to this is the need to develop instruction in ways which take into account the different learning styles of groups and individuals. This relates to the ways in which the curriculum can be differentiated through instruction. The administration is aware of the need to develop this aspect of instructional practice, and the staff has undertaken professional development in this recently.

The school's goals and plans are supported by effective management of the budget and staffing, based on the school's knowledge of its students and their achievement levels.

Staff know students very well, and the school places a high priority on caring for their wider as well as their academic needs. Most students feel confident that there is an adult to turn to if they need help. In general students show high levels of motivation; they strive to participate in order to succeed. Levels of attendance are high and students enjoy the opportunities the school offers them to gain success.

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.

Providing high quality professional development for all staff is a high priority for the school and is one of its strengths. The administration recognizes that good teachers also need to be supported by focused developmental opportunities and this philosophy is evident in the practice in the school. The collaborative working practices are also enhanced by the work of the professional development team who plan and revise the program of professional development. The strength of this program is that it links directly to the classroom and to the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, and has a strongly pragmatic as well as philosophical approach to teachers' development.

The administration upholds high standards and expectations for all and all members of staff are well aware of this. The principal observes classroom practice following a regular cycle of observation backed up by conferencing and goal setting. This is linked explicitly with the program of professional development as well as use of data. There are also good systems to underpin the needs of teachers and all staff. This too is important as the school grows. Teachers work together well and there is a clear understanding of the need for collaborative practice. This aids consistency as teachers leave and new staff are appointed. The administration knows the teachers well, is aware of strengths and areas for development and is proactive in the support it gives. Planning for sustainability is thoughtful and keeps the needs of students at the forefront.

The academic intervention services team, administration and staff developers work and plan effectively to help everyone to meet the goals set. There is much good practice in this aspect of the school's work. The principal and assistant principal are well respected by staff, students and the parent body, and the school runs smoothly as a result of their high expectations.

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 with some aspects for further development.

The school has built-in structures for evaluating progress for all students and this is a very effective aspect of its work. Staff are aware of the need to use assessment data for planning but not enough is being done to ensure that assessment efficiently builds on and makes use of the existing assessment data to align instruction to the individual learning styles of students.

The administration and the teams in place to support teachers and students work effectively and there is a solid structure to ensure progress and improvement. However, not enough is done to involve students in decision-making and enable them to set and revise their own academic and social goals.

The administration is characterized by reflective practice which sets the tone throughout the school, exemplified by the self-evaluation presented for the quality review. Collaboration and responsibility are key to the success and growth of the school. The Comprehensive Education Plan is a detailed and thoughtful structure for aiding the strategic direction of the school, and is regularly reviewed.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: THE FILLMORE ACADEMY (PS207)	∅	✓	+
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 knows and respect students and responds 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