



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**New Lots School**

**Public School 213**

**580 Hegeman Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11207**

**Principal: Joan Webson**

**Dates of review: June 4-6, 2007**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

New Lots School has 535 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The student population comprises 81% Black, 17% Hispanic, 1% white and 1% Asian and other ethnic backgrounds. The school has a very small English language learner population at 2%, significantly lower than that of similar and City schools. Special Education students are 11% of the schools' population. Eighty two percent of the school is Title 1 eligible and is in line with similar schools, but higher than the City average.

The school's population is at 77% of its physical capacity and the average class size is 22 students. Attendance is marginally below the average for similar and city schools at 91%. The school is fully staffed and the principal has been in position for 7 years.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is thoroughly respected, knows her school very well and has the capacity to continue to effect change.
- The principal and cabinet make frequent visits to classrooms, provide good feedback and facilitate appropriate staff inter-visitations.
- Teachers assess and track student progress in an effective manner.
- Collaboration between staff at all levels is high and effective, and has led to significant improvements in teaching and learning.
- Classrooms and the overall school environment are rich with standards driven student work.
- Teaching actively engage students and lessons are interdisciplinary in there content.
- Students are supportive of their school and value the instructional support as well as the trusting relationships they have formed with staff and administration.
- The school uses its budget effectively for focused and targeted support including providing small class sizes.
- Students at risk of not making appropriate grade levels are well supported by academic intervention services and in other effective ways.
- Procedures and protocols are clear to all constituents, leading to a school that runs smoothly.

### What the school needs to improve

- Extend professional development and ensure that all teachers improve their skills in planning for differentiation.
- Improve the quality of the way the school manages and analyzes its' data.
- Ensure that goals set are monitored and formally evaluated at interim periods of the year. Increase the frequency of monitoring progress of the CEP in order for goals and programs to be quickly adjusted where necessary.
- Increase the level of parental involvement so that the dialogue between parents and teachers work toward the goal of increasing student achievement.
- Improve systems/opportunities to increase students, teachers and parents have a role in school improvement decisions.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

Students and parents like their school and respect the principal. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and all resources needed to ensure student success within the capacity of the school are provided. Students are actively engaged in learning. Instructional programs are interdisciplinary in order to maintain curriculum connections for students. Collaborative teams work well together to identify students with high needs and provide the necessary supports for success. Teaching actively engages students who show that they are keen to learn. Classrooms are attractive and provide good, rich learning environments for students. Students know their teachers and find it easy to turn to several staff at times when they have concerns.

Most teachers keep detailed records on individual students to continually monitor and adjust strategies and materials used in the teaching and learning process. However, there is an inconsistent approach to using such information to ensure teaching is differentiated to meet the needs of all students. Goals are set on a school level with teachers, students and administrators in the effort to continue to impact student achievement. The school recognizes that it needs to focus more on the time frame for interim assessing of all data gathered including those for goals. The school has high expectations for students and is working together to ensure that they build on their successes and grow from areas in need. Currently, however, goals are not monitored through the year to allow for periodic evaluation and therefore assessment of whether the school is on track to achieve such goals.

### 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 gathers a great deal of good quality data from a variety of sources. This provides the school with updated records of student achievement as well as class and grade performance levels. However, while most teachers use individual student performance data effectively, there is little that is being done in a systematic manner on a school wide basis to track trends and patterns of overall students learning.

Teachers assess students on a regular basis using both teacher created tests as well as standardized assessments from programs such as Everyday Math. The data generated is then analyzed and put to good effect for purposes of identifying appropriate additional support for students, including grouping and other differentiated strategies that permits teachers to more accurately meet student needs. Detailed and comprehensive running records are kept on students tracking their progress and areas for continual growth.

Data is also kept on the basis of gender as the school is very conscious of gender issues and its impact on learning. Data gathered on gender is used to determine hiring needs as the school is focused on the issues of gender equity and role models for its male students.

The school has a very small population of English language learners and has taken steps such as hiring a bilingual paraprofessional to work with the classroom teacher to ensure there are adequate supports for the students. In special education, students are a part of all school wide activities including the thirty-seven and half minutes of tutoring the school offers. Tracking of progress and performance with similar schools is something the school is very conscious of and where they are on the continuum. The school is aware that it needs to develop this area as it has shown large gains in mathematics from 2003-2007 but very small incremental gains in English language arts for the same period of time.

**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 administration and staff know their student’s strengths and areas for growth well. Data is used by most teachers, but not all, to aid lesson planning and match work more closely to the specific needs of students. The school sets goals of a years worth of growth for each student. Formal conferencing with students provides good opportunities for teachers to work one on one with students giving them time together to develop learning goals based on the assessment results of the conference. This time is used effectively to develop and enhance the relationship between teacher and student while being fully focused on enhancing the academic experience of the student.

While goals are set by teachers for students, and by administrators for teachers and administrators for the whole school, the practice of measuring the goals for levels of success is very imprecise. There is no uniform standard measure for the goals set based on rubrics that clearly indicates the level of achievement that is readily apparent on the school wide level. Teachers and students generally appear uncertain as to the exact goals set and how it is evaluated. However, the quality of information about individual students standardized examination results and teacher made assessments ensure that students’ goals are set and monitored.

Particular attention is given to addressing the needs of students in greatest need of improvement. Small class size is maintained to ensure quality time spent with each student. Additional after school time is being utilized to tutor children. Teachers have high expectations of students and students know what is required of them in order for success to be achieved. Parents are invited to provide information about their child and feel welcome in the school and their child’s classroom leading to a sense of belonging as 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 aligns its programs of study with the mandated curriculum which provides the school with an array of quality data to support decisions regarding student learning. In addition, students receive instruction in social studies, science, and computers. Programs such as dance, music and physical education are provided to enrich students’ learning

experiences. Teachers work closely and collaboratively to grow and develop their planning and tool kit of strategies to improve student engagement and learning. They meet formally once a week at grade levels to plan and share resources and ideas and informally on a more frequent basis. While teachers' assessment of individual students is good and systematic there is a need to differentiate instruction on a school wide basis to meet the needs that assessments have revealed.

Budgeting decisions are made primarily on the basis of keeping class size small and providing teachers with all the resources they need. The school also focuses its spending on providing additional effective support programs to aid at risk students. Student needs are the constant in all decisions including those of the school's hiring practice of a "gender balanced staff" to ensure that there is a mix of male and female role models for the students. Male students find that having male teachers are a positive as they can "talk" to them about things that are of concern to them as males and the principal feels that male teachers provide the positive male relationship that is lacking for the students.

Students feel very comfortable and like their school because they are aware of the staff and administration's open door policy for questions and concerns. They are cognizant of the fact that members of the school community know, care and respect them. Instructional programs actively engage students. They are able to clearly articulate what they are learning and why they are learning it. Procedures for following up on absence are proficient but have not been successful in increasing the levels of attendance over the last three years.

**Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The principal is well respected and her ability to effect change is excellent. The school runs smoothly and all constituents are aware of procedures and protocols. The principal and assistant principal frequently observe classroom teachers and gives good quality feed back to ensure that teachers' practice grow and develop. As a result, they know their staff well and are readily able to identify teachers' levels of professionalism and needs for support. Teachers meet regularly for grade conferences and informally meet daily. All meetings have a focus on sharing resources and developing best practices with the goal of increasing student achievement. Strong collaboration is evident among the staff as they plan together for their own professional development and conduct self-directed inter-visitations with colleagues. While there is a tremendous amount of collaboration, the need for more professional development to help teachers learn to plan for differentiation is evident in visits to classrooms.

Staff are selected on the basis of students needs. Teachers are hired based on their understanding of content in grades 4 and 5. Classroom teachers for students, grades K – 2, are required to come with special training in early childhood. The school also makes staffing decisions based on gender to create a more balanced staff of male and female teachers which has been identified as a positive means of building strong relationships with male students. Entire grade levels of teachers have reached fluency in subject matter as they plan together which has resulted in a sense of autonomy for some as they have attained mastery while others are being supported more by the literacy and mathematics coaches to continue to plan and differentiate their instruction.

Youth development is aligned around stated goals and there is a plethora of outside partnerships to engage students and aid in the achievement of academic goals such as the Brooklyn Museum which trains teachers to create exhibits with their students.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The principal meets with staff to set yearly goals based on what the principal and the teacher identify as needs for the teacher to grow professionally. While there are informal measurements for the achievement of goals, there are no formal set criteria or rubrics for interim assessment of goals.

The level of support individual students receive is focused and targeted within the classrooms. There is flexibility on the part of school administration in having teachers develop approaches to the work in order to make immediate adjustments needed for students to reach their stated goals. The school recognizes that teachers have the most updated understanding of student progress and giving teacher the decision making has translated into greater student achievement on standardized test scores. Grade level meetings are venues for discussions of student's performance and next steps. The ability to be a good citizen is a large part of the schools work as there is an underlying belief that personal and social development will aid in academic success. The tone of the school, the lowered suspension rates and the celebratory events the school has implemented all contribute towards this goal of creating good citizens.

Goals set are not specific or measurable in a manner that would yield robust data for the next steps needed for continual growth. Regular monitoring and interim assessments to adjust goals are not in place in order to ascertain whether modifications are necessary. Goals are set and have importance to the school but it is the next step in the process that needs to be developed.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: New Lots School (PS 213)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<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>		X	
<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	