



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Hale A. Woodruff School

Public School 224

**755 Wortman Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11208**

Principal: George Andrews

Dates of review: May 30 – 31, 2007

Reviewer: John Barnes

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Hale Woodruff School, Public School 224, is a pre-kindergarten through 6th grade elementary school serving the East New York community of Brooklyn. There are 855 students enrolled. The main ethnic groups comprise 73% Black, 24% Hispanic, and 1% Native American. The number of students who are English language learners is about 8%. The proportion of students receiving special education services is 6%.

Levels of attendance are lower than the City average of 92% and sit at 90% for a daily average. The proportion of students who receive Title 1 funding is 98%, which is higher than similar and other City schools.

Higher performing students are often recruited into specialized programs in other schools across the region. The proportion of English language learners is growing in the school community.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The dedicated principal, ably supported by the assistant principals and coaches has stabilized the building over the last three years.
- The enrichment program extends the core curriculum well using a good variety of sports, music, and performance experiences.
- Technology is effectively used to increase student learning and engagement with extensive professional development provided for the staff.
- The principal has a clear vision for the future of the school and the capacity to achieve it.
- The tone of the building is warm, nurturing, and the school runs smoothly.
- Good attention is paid to students in the greatest need so that they progress well.
- The principal has significantly improved resources for learning throughout the content areas.
- Students greatly appreciate the support and guidance they receive from staff.
- Teachers appreciate weekly professional development and support from the coaches and assistant principals.
- The school has well managed teams of coaches and assistant principals who gather, sort, and distribute information effectively.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the use of assessment data to facilitate more focused differentiated instruction within the classroom.
- Analyze school data ensuring the implementation of interim goals for students, classes, and the whole school inclusive of all sub-groups.
- Increase parental involvement to improve punctuality, attendance, and support for learning at home.
- Build the capacity of grade leaders so as to disperse leadership and decision-making more widely across the school.
- Improve consistency and protocols for looking at student work, providing feedback to students, and displaying of student work.
- Provide more formalized opportunities for teachers, administrators, and staff to visit classrooms to improve practices and build a cohesive team.

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal is well regarded for his hard-working approach and commitment to equipping classrooms with technology, textbooks, and resources to support learning. There is a strong sense of teamwork within the instructional cabinet. The principal is ably supported by dedicated assistant principals, coaches, and a nurturing teachers' center. Exciting developments with technology are present. Students actively engage with the Smart boards and laptops, with technology integrated throughout interdisciplinary activities within the content areas. All special education classrooms are equipped with mobile laptop carts.

The school is developing data systems to check student performance and monitor the progress of students. Weekly professional development is well managed and recorded. All students in grades 2 and above are invited to take part in either the morning or after school program. However, lateness and attendance issues lower the number of students receiving additional instruction and interventions in the morning. The school has a safe, warm tone and students feel well cared for. The average class size is smaller than those of similar schools in the City.

Enrichment opportunities are provided through after school sports and arts programs. The school has partnerships with community based organizations that support learning well.

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.

There is a large mass of data generated, especially in the lower elementary literacy classrooms that began the Reading First program this year. Teachers within these grades use the 'DIBELS' program and the 'ECLAS-2' assessments with Palm Pilots to gather and store information. This provides for immediate collation and analysis of the data. Teacher-generated data in the upper elementary classrooms is supplemented with the literacy and mathematics benchmark examinations administered by The Princeton Review. Teachers have data folios which are updated as assessments are completed. Administrators have grade specific data folios which are also updated periodically. Consequently, teachers have a clear understanding of the achievement of individual students and their class as a whole in reading, writing, and mathematics. In addition, the administration has a view across grades.

The New York State English as a Second Language Test data serves as the main tool to understand the performance of the English language learners. Special education students are appropriately tracked through their progress towards the goals outlined in their individualized education plans. The school has now recognized the need to use the available data to constantly update and understand the progress of various other groupings of students, such as ethnic groups and gender. Particular attention is paid to

understanding the performance of students at level 1 and 2 on the State standards, as well as those close to a level boundary. There is an organized portfolio system throughout the school, which is used especially consistently in the upper elementary classrooms. Appropriate systems have been established for teachers to collect information for the portfolios, which are transferred as the students progress through the grades.

The principal analyzes performance on State and City tests to track trends in student performance and comparisons with similar schools. Such summative data is also analyzed for comparisons between individual students. Performance is also compared between different classrooms.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school has begun to put systems in place to make more use of the data it gathers. As an extended time school, teachers began the academic year a week early and analyzed the data from the previous school year. The principal met with individual teachers to agree personalized goals for the year ahead. The school has appropriate mechanisms in place to formulate and discuss school-wide goals, as encapsulated within the Comprehensive Education Plan across the school community. Shorter term instructional goals are established, for example for individual students following assessments and for teachers following development work with coaches. However, the implementation of protocols for looking at student work, providing feedback to students, and the displaying of student work remains variable.

English language learners, promotion in doubt students, and holdovers are all targeted and mandated for the morning program with additional intervention. The school’s effective communication with families and with other agencies ensures that those students needing to make most progress are carefully identified. Profitable collaboration between class teachers, academic intervention services and special education support services ensures that these students make good progress.

The parent coordinator works closely with the pupil personal team and United Federation of Teachers’ Center to encourage parental involvement in the school. The school seeks various ways to convey its high expectations, disseminate information and help parents to support learning at home. Parents feel confident that there are good opportunities provided for those who want to be involved with the plans for improving student performance. The school is open and welcoming. Teachers are quick to contact parents when issues arise, as well as when success is achieved. Nevertheless, the school remains concerned to increase the number of parents who are actively engaged in the process, both for individual students and for the school as a whole.

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

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school has selected its curriculum based on the statutory requirements. The recently introduced Reading First program for kindergarten through to grade 3 is heavily data driven. Programs are chosen to actively engage students. For example games, manipulatives and explorations are utilized in mathematics, while in science; students are exposed to hands-on exploratory learning. An enrichment program extends the core curriculum well using a good variety of sports, music, and performance experiences. The school is exploring the introduction of a gifted and talented program to provide more extensively for this group of students.

Teachers are held accountable for the quality of their instruction. The school’s coaches are working with teachers to differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data. However, fully differentiated instruction is not yet consistently evident and the school recognizes the need to strengthen this further, so that all students are engaged at an appropriately challenging level. Technology is often used effectively to increase student learning and engagement.

The budget is strategically focused on supporting the school’s plans and goals and is enabling resources to be targeted very effectively to meet student needs. The principal has purchased a range of good quality textbooks for literacy, mathematics, social studies, and science. He has a mission to equip every classroom with a laptop cart and has purchased leveled libraries for teachers to facilitate guided reading instruction. Plans are well advanced to hire additional science teachers next year to support the implementation of the new science curriculum. Test sophistication is built into the curriculum mapping for both literacy and mathematics with scheduling of test preparation in alignment with the State test calendar.

The school promotes a very caring culture with students feeling valued, respected, and able to approach one of the adults if they are having worries or concerns. Staff know the students well and are concerned for their personal as well as academic growth. Appropriate systems are in place to pursue persistent absentees and latecomers, although attendance remains an issue for the school.

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.

There has been a consistent turnover of teachers within the school over the last few years. This has necessitated an almost constant professional development program to support new teachers in becoming established and fully effective. The principal plans to move recruitment into the open market with the intention of recruiting staff who are more likely to remain longer than an allotted two years. In the beginning of the school year teacher surveys are administered and the responses used to develop future professional development. The coaches play a key role in collaboration with the assistant principals in supporting teachers in measuring student outcomes. The teachers recognize the quality of the professional development and the support that they receive from the coaches and

assistant principals. The next step involves assisting staff in using the data in a efficient manner.

Weekly reflections are brought to the principal from the coaches after observing classroom practice and performing walkthroughs. This supplements the information gathered by the administration. Consequently the administration has a clear perspective of the strengths and development needs of teachers. Teachers also informally visit each other's classrooms. Good systems for collaborative planning, reviewing data and looking at students' work all take place regularly, although this does not yet consistently lead to candid self and peer review. The principal is recognized by the whole school community for having created a team of dedicated professionals who have a set of common goals for the students. His drive and vision show that he has the capacity to continue to develop the school. Plans are in place to have grade leaders become more involved in the planning, evaluation of results, and the revision of plans.

The tone of the building is warm, nurturing, and the school runs smoothly. Systems are in place that are readily communicated to all staff members. The faculty handbook serves as a framework establishing norms and clear expectations for staff to follow. The principal has dedicated himself to establish partnerships with a large number of community based organizations and has developed constructive relations with groups who actively support the school's programs.

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 has a clear vision of the school developing a comprehensive framework to analyze the existing school data and implementing interim goal setting for students and staff to measure progress. The coaches have a strong overview of their areas of responsibility and plan professional development to address the areas of the curriculum that are impeding progress. The school has clear markers for measuring the progress of individual students. Interventions are offered to all students in Levels 1 and 2, with additional enrichment opportunities extended to the Level 3 and 4 students. Interim diagnostic assessment is analyzed and communicated to staff at weekly meetings, sessions with coaches, and common planning time.

The Comprehensive Education Plan includes goals to be achieved by the end of the year and actions to achieve them. The professional development team reviews the associated action plans alongside a review of data folios to determine if adaptations are required. However, the main priorities in the document are not articulated widely by staff or parents, although representatives of both groups were involved in their formulation and review through the school leadership team. Consequently these goals and plans are not being used strategically by all staff. Requiring staff members to further improve their competence and confidence in the use of data is an ongoing goal for the school. The principal is targeting more reflective practice by teachers to evaluate their own goals and objectives. Looking at trends in student outcomes is not yet well developed to allow ongoing comparisons between classes and across grades to be used consistently to evaluate programs and student progress. The school recognizes the need to make this a priority and has the capacity to develop a longer term strategic plan based on analysis of such information.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

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| SCHOOL NAME: Hale A. Woodruff School (PS 224) | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| Quality Score | | X | |

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| 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.

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| 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 | |

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| 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 | |