



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Public School 245
249 East 17th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11226**

Principal: Patricia A Kannengieser

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Reviewer: Barbara Kwiecinski and Peter Lewis

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 245 serves 155 students from pre-kindergarten to 5th grade. The school is comprised of 93% Black students which is much higher than similar or City schools' averages, 3% of students are Hispanic, which is much lower than similar or City schools' averages. One percent are White students and 2% are Asian and other ethnicities. Eight percent are special education students and 3% are English language learners. The school is not eligible for Title 1 funding. The school's attendance is 94% which is equivalent to similar schools or New York City averages.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's energy, sense of purpose and 'hands on approach' has positively changed the tone of the school in a short space of time.
- The academic intervention program effectively meets the needs of individual students and results in good progress.
- The literacy coach and the academic intervention teacher share the principal's vision and are effectively working with teachers to move the school forward.
- Clear articulation sheets monitor the curriculum and social progress of each student giving the next grade teacher a clear indication of student performance.
- Grade level meetings are well organized, with clear agendas which effectively inform teachers of the students' progress.
- Students are well prepared for junior high school and are clear on the academic requirements needed.
- The school is very inclusive and sees itself as a learning family which includes staff, parents, students and the community at large.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the school has an appropriate strategic plan in place which includes clear time frames, goals, measurable outcomes and evaluation.
- Ensure that teaching is effectively differentiated to meet the needs of all students.
- Compare student performance and progress with similar schools and with school's own past performance.
- Ensure that teachers reflect on the impact of their instruction on student learning.
- Extend the enrichment activities available for students.
- Improve the professional development opportunities available to staff.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Public School 245 is a small school in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, which has one class in each grade from pre-kindergarten to 5th grade. This creates a familial atmosphere where staff, parents and the community at large work together to provide a supportive education for students. The school rents space in a building that is owned by the Catholic church. Because the church uses the facilities in the evening, the school is not able to schedule evening activities for parents nor can it run Saturday academies for instruction or recreation. The school does not have outdoor facilities the students can use.

The principal has been in post since September, is excited by her new challenge and is very determined to make a difference in the students' lives. Teachers speak very positively about her 'hands on approach' and clearly defined behavior policy. Student results are good especially in science and English language arts. In a very short space of time the principal, the academic intervention teacher and the literacy coach, who collectively form the cabinet, have worked tirelessly to put systems in place to document and understand student progress.

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 has many structures in place to understand the performance of individual students and continuously evaluates the usefulness of each data gathering tool. Students' literacy skills are assessed in September using running records and then early childhood literacy assessment system evaluations begin in grades 1 to 3. Other formal assessments used during the school year include Princeton Review, Everyday Mathematics Unit Assessments, Rally Rehearsal exams and New York State sample assessments in English language arts and mathematics. The combination of these assessments plus informal assessment gives teachers a clear and accurate picture of each student's and grade level progress. Teachers welcome the support they receive from the principal, academic intervention teacher and the literacy coach to understand the data and how it can be used to inform practice.

The school effectively supports the small number of English language learners and special education students. It also identified the need to support students whose parents have English as a second language. At present the data is not used to track the progress of different ethnic groups or males and females. Comparisons with similar schools and the school's past performance are not being made.

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.

Staff, students and parents speak very positively about the small size of the school. The principal describes it as ‘like a large family’. The small size makes it easier to identify children with academic needs and to schedule time to meet these. Academic intervention is in place, where each student is assessed and appropriate pull-out support is given. Teachers meet formally and informally and are very eager to support all students. Formal assessments are reviewed at the bi-weekly grade level meetings and the principal checks the Princeton Review data and the Everyday Mathematics results. The school is very clear of each student’s level and is providing extra support including early morning Passport Voyager instruction for the lowest performing 1st grade students. Early morning intervention is also in place both in mathematics and English language arts for the lowest performing students in grades 3, 4 and 5. As a consequence, their scores are improving and the school is determined to continue this upward trend.

The school is working towards the goals and plans identified in the Comprehensive Education Plan. These focus on progress for each grade and subject. Plans are in place to work collaboratively to set measurable goals and short- and long-term evaluation points for the forthcoming year.

Students are very aware of their levels and speak with pride about their achievements. They particularly like science when they are involved in experiments. This is reflected in the science results where all students in 4th grade gained levels 3 or 4. Parents are made to feel very welcome in the school where the principal has an open door policy and is always ready to discuss student progress. They are pleased that the principal sets high expectations but feel that the higher achieving students would respond to even greater challenges. The school plans to increase ways in which small groups of parents and staff can work together in setting goals.

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.

In addition to the mandated curriculum the school provides enrichment activities in reading, mathematics and science. This has resulted in students who were expected to be holdovers, achieving their promotional scores. The school is a recipient of the Midori grant. This has allowed an infusion of art in the form of music and theater into the curriculum. This is well received by students and improves students’ confidence. The identification of 71% of students gaining levels 3 and 4 in mathematics, which is lower than both similar schools and City averages has precipitated the hiring of a mathematics coach for the academic year 2007-2008.

As of yet not all planning and instruction is differentiated sufficiently to meet every student’s need, which results in some students being disengaged.. Teacher accountability is an undeveloped feature of the school.

The principal is very creative in her use of budget and is particularly adept at persuading people to donate extra resources to complement her small budget. One creative use of resources was awarding prizes to students who won the early morning whole school trivia quiz, which asked questions related to their particular grade's curriculum. The academic intervention program has met individual student need and schedules have been altered in order to give students the appropriate support. Students like coming to school and attendance is nearly at its target of 95%. They feel well supported by teachers and feel that there is always someone to turn to. Students receive good support both academically and personally.

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 has a very clear idea as to where her staffing strengths are and has strategies in place to support teachers. Most teachers welcome the time she spends observing lessons and find the feedback helpful. Mathematics teachers have welcomed the fact that she has provided them with more manipulatives resulting in students being more involved in their learning. The small size of the school makes it difficult for teachers to observe each other's lessons as there is little flexibility in the schedule, but they have been able to visit another public school where they saw exemplary teaching. Professional development addresses the needs of teachers, including improvement of classroom management skills.

Grade level planning time is now built in to the schedule. This allows teachers to meet weekly with the literacy coach to share ideas and learn new strategies and skills. Through the hard work of the principal the school runs smoothly and her determination and drive result in her being well respected by staff, students and parents. She has the capacity to effect even greater change. New staff selection clearly focuses on the needs of the students. For example the mathematics results identified the need to hire a mathematics coach.

Teachers are very supportive of the principal and the majority freely give of their time for Saturday planning sessions in June. They speak positively about this as it gives an opportunity to reflect on the year, examine data and use the scores to set the direction for the coming year. The school has partnerships with outside bodies which are supportive of the curriculum.

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 undeveloped.

The school has come a long way since September 2006. All staff have very accurate information about the performance of each individual student. This was not the case last year. All staff communicate on a daily basis about student progress. The small size of the school and the knowledge about each student results in plans being adapted accordingly. The grade level folders are of high quality and the articulation sheets mean that student

progress can now be tracked from grade to grade. Due to the inherited situation student progress is not yet tracked across grades. However the interim results from the quarterly assessments have resulted in the adaptation of interventions and the academic intervention program is very effective.

The needs revealed by the data are not always incorporated effectively into planning and, as a result, the needs of all students are not met. It is the principal's intention to extend the good work already started and to refine the systems so that all plans have objectively measurable goals where one plan drives the next resulting in all teachers meeting all students' needs.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 245	∅	✓	+
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		