



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**John F. Hylan School**

**Public School 257**

**60 Cook Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11206**

**Principal: Brian Leavy DeVale**

**Dates of review: February 14 - 15, 2007**

**Reviewer: Cheryl Baker**

# Content of the report

## **Part 1: The School Context**

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

Public School 257 is a pre-kindergarten through grade 5 school serving 568 students. Approximately 20% of the population are special education students and nearly 30% are English language learners. The student population is 70% Hispanic, 29% Black and 1% represent other backgrounds. The school is Title I eligible with the proportion of qualifying students exceeding that of the City and similar schools. Attendance averaged above 91% for the period 2003-2005, slightly below City and similar schools, but has now increased to approximately 95%.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school fosters a sense of community that values and respects the unique characteristics of all of its students.
- Students are supported by an array of academic, special education and English language learning programs designed to address their individual needs.
- The instructional staff are empowered to participate in decision making in the school.
- The assistant principal, with the support and encouragement of the principal, has increased the focus on the use of data to inform instruction and is providing support to teachers in utilizing the available information effectively.
- Students enjoy a broad menu of after-school activities that allow them to grow athletically and artistically, as well as academically.
- Parents are welcomed in the school and value the programs offered to them as well as the degree to which they are included in the decision-making processes in the school.
- The school enjoys a sound reputation in the community and has support networks with numerous civic, social, academic and cultural organizations.
- Students continue to demonstrate overall annual increases in performance on State tests.
- The school has shown increases in student attendance which now approaches 95%.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to provide teachers with training in the analysis of statistical and anecdotal data to diagnose the specific learning needs of their students.
- Refine teachers' skills in differentiating classroom instruction based on their knowledge of students' learning needs.
- Ensure that plans for school improvement identify interim goals, timelines, actions and objective measures of success.
- Develop support and challenge for the most academically advanced students.
- Evaluate the overall effectiveness of other intervention programs in supporting continued student achievement.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

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

Public School 257 continues to make progress with respect to using the available information about student performance in creating intervention programs. The recent configuration of the academic intervention services program and the formation of a broad-based instructional cabinet bode well for the school's capacity to continue to improve. The school community and the community at large are broadly focused on improvement and the school recognizes that increased targeted planning has the potential to direct actions and resources towards specific areas of need. Teachers, administrators and support staff, many of whom have neighborhood roots, are deeply committed to providing the best educational experience for the students at Public School 257.

### 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, through the efforts of the assistant principal, increased its capacity to gather and use data. Information from State and City tests, reports of annual yearly progress, curriculum-embedded assessments, annualized portfolios, and periodic assessment results are increasingly used to develop an understanding of what each student knows and is able to do. Appropriate assessment reports are distributed to teachers and can be easily accessed in the school's new academic intervention services headquarters.

Particular attention is paid to the progress of individual students and grade levels. Less emphasis is placed on comparisons of performance classroom to classroom. The progress of academic subjects is monitored through State assessment scores and it is tracked longitudinally. The school is aware of its progress relative to that of similar and City schools and is rightly proud of its record of annual increases in scores in the tested content areas. The 2006 English language arts scores, for example, increased at each grade except grade 5 and mathematics scores increased at grades 3 through 6.

Data pertaining to the progress of English language learners and special education students is gathered and monitored by specialists assigned to these programs. Data regarding performance by gender and ethnic groups are not aggressively updated or analyzed; however, administrators are aware of the overall annual progress of these sub-groups. For the last few years the school has been recognized for its improvement towards closing the achievement gap by the New York State Department of Education.

**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 leadership team reviews the appropriate data and survey results in the process of developing the annual Comprehensive Education Plan. The plan’s goals are primarily long-term and are expressed as targets for percentage improvements in all aspects of the school. The plan does note some incremental measures to be used to monitor progress but is not specific as to short-term goals or timelines. Monthly meetings of the school leadership team allow for progress monitoring. Directives in the principal’s performance review influence annual targets for improvement, such as the current emphasis on improving student attendance. The school’s plans for delivering the mandated curricula are developed by the instructional team and at grade level team meetings during their weekly conferences. Goals for content delivery are loosely informed by State testing dates. In general, the goals embodied in the aforementioned plans influence the activity of all members of the school community.

The school has established processes for identifying students in greatest need of improvement such as English language learners and special education students. Depending on their level of need, their individual progress is supported and monitored through specific programs, plans and assessments designed to improve their progress. For students identified for academic intervention services, the school has designed an array of small group or one-on-one interventions that are delivered during the school day primarily through the pull-out model. Additionally, the school has created an academic intervention services resource center to provide teachers with access to data regarding student progress. The academic intervention team meets regularly to identify students, plan interventions and monitor progress. As this initiative is evolving, representative membership on the academic intervention team is being broadened and consideration is being given to planning for the needs of the school’s highest-achieving students.

Parents report that they believe their children are receiving a good education, and that the teachers do their best to help students. The school supports them in helping their children to make progress by presenting workshops on what is being taught in the core tested areas. Report cards and progress reports communicate student progress. Parents appreciate the effort the school has put towards offering morning athletics and tutoring as well as after-school clubs and enrichment programs.

**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’s curriculum reflects the City mandates and State standards. Assessment practices, especially those embedded in the balanced literacy program, are used efficiently to measure student progress. Common planning time for grade level teachers supports their regular collaboration on assessment analysis, the review of student work and planning for instruction. Differentiation of instruction for individual students at the classroom level is emerging, but not yet well established. The alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment is also supported by the weekly meeting of the school’s

instructional team comprised of grade leaders and representatives from all of the school's support programs. Led by the assistant principal, the activities of this team foster an inclusive, coherent and consistent instructional program across all grades and content areas. Teachers feel pride in their school's progress and want to improve instruction and outcomes. Administrators monitor their success through observation and the review of annual grade level achievement. Results of interim assessments are compared at the class level but not across classrooms.

Data regarding enrollment, achievement, attendance and changes in City and State mandates are taken into consideration when developing the budget, planning for staffing or making scheduling decisions. For example, time for mathematics instruction was increased in the testing grades to support increased achievement. A staff developer was hired to support the instruction at the primary grades in lieu of replacing an assistant principal. The needs of the school's large and diverse special education population dictates expenditures for the staff, materials and equipment necessary to meet individual student needs.

Instruction is engaging and students report that they like coming to school. They like their teachers, feel known and supported by the school administration and appreciate the sports and activities that the school has added to its overall program. Students and parents report that these programs have provided incentives for students to come to school. Student attendance has continued to rise over the last two years and is currently above 95%. Teachers often incorporate attendance data into mathematics instruction by charting or graphing their daily attendance and classes with perfect attendance receive rewards.

**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 and assistant principal are respected by staff, students, parents and the community. The school runs smoothly and procedures are clear. The staff is stable with little annual turnover. The qualities most desired in new hires include commitment to the community and its students. At the tested grades, knowledge of assessments and data analysis skills are desirable.

Administrators observe instruction on an informal basis daily, sometimes commenting on instruction. Coaches and the staff developer contribute to the support of teachers as they implement the curriculum. Teachers, especially those new to the profession, visit colleagues' classrooms to gain new skills and the school engages in intervisitations to support implementation of programs, such as the current academic intervention program.

The school fosters collaborative decision-making. The grade level teams and their interface with the instructional team empower teachers to evaluate their progress, identify professional development needs and collectively drive school improvement. The academic intervention team further supports collaboration regarding the improvement of students at risk. Recent professional development initiatives have concentrated on training in the use of technology to assess students and analyze the results of student assessments.

The school's long-standing community focus and generational relationship with civic, academic, social, athletic and other organizations is used effectively to provide students with a network of activities and supports for their academic and extracurricular growth.

**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 structure of the school leadership team provides for the monitoring of the school's progress toward meeting its annual goals as expressed in the Comprehensive Education Plan. The principal's performance review process includes a mid-year assessment. Curricular planning is characterized by regular monitoring and revision within the grade level and instructional team structure. These structures allow for comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and support orderly revisions to, for example, pacing calendars when student progress warrants re-teaching.

Results from the interim assessments employed by the school increasingly inform teachers of the understanding that individual students have with respect to discrete content strands in mathematics and English language arts. Diagnostic data is tracked by test administration to identify areas of weakness and inform instruction or intervention plan revision. For students with individual education plans, academic intervention plans, or programmatic plans directed at their acquisition of English language fluency, regular measures of progress are used to evaluate program effectiveness and revise instructional plans.

Thus far, the school's practices have been effective in improving student achievement with scores in the tested subjects exceeding those of similar and City schools for the general population and for English language learners. Even with a high proportion of students with the greatest need, scores in English language arts exceeded that of similar schools.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: John F. Hylan School (PS 257)</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	