



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Kosciusko School

Public School 274

**800 Bushwick Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: Martha Ollivierra-Jones

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Reviewer: Nan Billingham

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Kosciusko School serves 844 students in the Bushwick area from pre-kindergarten through to grade 5. Currently 75.6% of the students are Hispanic, 21.2% are Black, 2.0% Asian and from other ethnic groups and 1.2% are White. There are 170 English language learner students and 53 special education students. Attendance figure levels to date are 91.1% and are in line with similar schools but lower than City schools. The school receives Title 1 funding, with 98% eligible, which is above similar and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has implemented a range of strategies to improve the quality of each teacher's instruction.
- The development of new collaborative teams drive the curriculum and instruction forward.
- The school creates innovative strategies and opportunities for professional development for all staff.
- Teachers use data well to support planning, differentiated instruction and the effective use of resources.
- After school programs provide students with access to a wide range of activities.
- Partnerships with community-based organizations and other institutions enhance the students' learning experiences.
- The administrators consistently and systematically observe outcomes to identify and shape good practice and drive professional development decisions.
- There are excellent relationships between students, school staff and parents.
- The collaborative and supportive climate of the school fosters a positive and collegial environment.

What the school needs to improve

- Use and manage data more systematically to support all students.
- Ensure all school plans and interventions include measurable benchmarks which can be monitored and evaluated against the goals throughout the academic year.
- Develop strategies to support the achievement of all English language learners.
- Continue to build and develop teachers' mathematical content knowledge to support differentiated instruction.
- Continue to promote parental involvement to support student achievement.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Although relatively new to the school the principal with her assistants have prioritized the school's strengths and areas for development. The creation of new focus teams adds support to this work and is driving forward the quality of instruction. The principal has already begun to look at more systematic ways of ensuring that data drives instruction. She is analyzing data to support subgroups within the school community. To date these include those in transitional housing and asthma sufferers. The parents' association works closely with the school to increase students' attendance. This work, and the involvement of an increasing numbers of parents at meetings and workshops, are good indicators of their support for the school.

Staff support each other and work collaboratively to increase the performance of each of their students. The wide range of enrichment programs and additional academic support initiatives also support all groups of children to ensure they have opportunities to succeed. A distinctive feature of the Kosciusko School is its excellent work with local community partnerships to introduce amenities which are beneficial to the students and their families; notably the excellent new playground facilities.

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 data three times a year for English language arts and mathematics. Teachers analyze the assessments and identify specific areas of under achievement to address. Teachers then create their own tests to provide more data to check and monitor progress in the areas identified. The school generates data and observes the performance of each student, classroom and grade level.

The school uses mandated data including early childhood literacy assessment system, Princeton reviews and New York State English as a second language achievement test to support their own data. These scores are analyzed and given to all teachers. Student cumulative record cards are used along side the student permanent records as a reference point on how each individual student is performing. The school uses running records to track growth and to match students to appropriate groups. Observations, records, formal and informal walk throughs and running records all monitor student progress over time.

Performance and progress of special education students and English language learners of observed regularly by the school. The school also observes other categories of interest to the school, such as students with chronic asthma and those in transitional housing. The principal has identified that their attendance rates are not very high. This impacts their progress and she has developed a range of strategies, including links with the local hospital and other community groups, to support these students and their families. The

school compares its data against other schools in their district and against its own past performance.

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’s current Comprehensive Education Plan’s goals and objectives are monitored and reviewed by different teams. At present, the goals of the Comprehensive Education Plan are not fully aligned to data driven instruction. This is a key objective of the administrators for next year.

Classroom observations by the principal and her administrators are instrumental in highlighting what needs to be done to improve and support student instruction and therefore progress. Discussions around goals and targets take place with most individual students. This allows strengths and areas for development to be identified. For example, the after-school, extended day, Saturday academy and Mathematics zero hour were created based on data analysis with the goal of helping students improve their performance levels.

Particular attention is given to students in greatest need of improvement. For example, all special education students have clearly outlined goals and parents are kept fully informed and involved in their children’s progress. Their academic programs are supported by the school-based support team and guidance counselors.

The school conveys high expectations to parents and students. Parents feel they are kept informed of their children’s progress through report cards and parent conferences. Students commented that teachers are supportive in helping them define their next steps and that there is some opportunity for self-reflection.

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 delivers the mandated curriculum through the Teachers College balanced literacy program and Every Day Mathematics. Social studies is only taught in grade 5. During the summer semester there is a lively social studies class after school for grade 4 students in preparation for grade 5. Physical education is a high priority for the school, with the goal of supporting and encouraging healthy lifestyles for all students. Art and drama instruction is viewed as a high priority and during this semester the school prepares for its highly successful two day multicultural festival. The principal, staff and parents all articulated that the extensive arts programs give all students, but especially those who are lacking in self confidence, another opportunity to excel or demonstrate progress.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling is responsive to student needs. For example, analysis of English language arts data for English language learners has identified that the ‘push in’ model is not sufficiently effective and as a result the cabinet has decided to create a new

English as a second language class to support these students. Scheduling of common preparation time is effective and very popular with the teachers. It allows for accountability and consistency across grade levels and ensures best practice in literacy is used across science and social studies lessons. In the upper grades scheduling of art and physical education classes is in the afternoon to allow all students to be engaged in literacy and mathematics in the mornings.

Instructional programs are well planned and most students in lessons are engaged and enjoy the variety of activities offered. Teachers use the standard course materials but these are refined with the help of the coaches to meet individual needs in each lesson. The school has a literacy resource room which provides a wide range of reading materials and resources to engage all students across all curriculum areas.

Attendance was decreasing when the principal was appointed but she has, along with her administrators, introduced several initiatives to support increased attendance. There are student of the month awards and prize draws for the families of students with 100% attendance. This is supported by the parents association and, in turn, this has encouraged more parents to attend the monthly meeting and workshops.

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 created an interview committee to assist in the hiring process. Staff are selected on the basis of their passion for teaching and commitment to using data. Professional development decisions are made based on information from observations, needs assessment and a range of student data. Professional development is differentiated for teachers based on their need. The principal with her assistant principals carry out formal and informal weekly observations and walk-throughs every day. All observations are recorded and targeted towards student improvement. Peer and inter-visitations are encouraged. The feedback is constructive and is incorporated into the school's goals, targets and professional development program. In addition, there are lunch and learns and additional after-school workshops available for teachers. Teams work well together through common preparation time. New voluntary teams have been formed, including the instructional team, which review observation data to make short and long-term decisions. Staff articulated how they feel well supported by this team.

The principal is well respected by staff, students and parents and in the short time she has been in post they acknowledge she has made significant changes for the better. With her administrators she has introduced innovative initiatives and solutions to support the students, their parents and the staff. The school runs smoothly on a day to day basis. Procedures are clear, from the flow charts in classrooms to very good communication with parents. The parents' association feels well supported and good partnerships with local community organizations, such as the hospital, provide for a range of family learning opportunities. The new community playground and the Robin Hood Library, to open later this year, are both fine examples of the school and the community working together to support the children's learning.

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 school's monitoring and evaluation systems are developing. The Comprehensive Education Plan is at present reviewed annually and intermittently. The principal intends to build in systematic review for all goals and targets at least 3 times a year starting in September 2007. For groups of children at risk of not meeting the standard there are sound procedures in place to ensure plans are adapted or adjusted to meet students' needs quickly. This includes dedicated meeting times between classroom teachers and the academic intervention services team and monthly meetings for the pupil personnel team. Through the analysis of performance data, the principal and her assistant principals regularly discuss and evaluate successes and areas of need in relation to student performance and goals. While teachers revise individual student plans in response to data, this is not done at the whole school level as of yet.

Attendance and the impact of attendance strategies have been carefully monitored this year by the principal and her cabinet and there has been good progress. A large amount of resources has been put into the professional development of instruction for teachers. This is monitored closely by the instruction team to ensure that the training is impacting directly in classes across all grades.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Kosciusko School (PS 274)	∅	✓	+
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	