



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Park Slope Elementary School

Public School 282

**180 6th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11217**

Principal: Magalie Alexis

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Reviewer: Richard Woolf

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

This is a pre-kindergarten through grade 5 school with 665 enrolled students. The majority of students are in general education with only 3% English language learners and 6% special education students. Both percentages are very low when compared to similar or other City schools. The school population is made up of 67% Black, 26% Hispanic 6%, Asian, and 1% White and others. The school has 25 classes in general education and one bridge 4th and 5th grade self-contained special education class. The school no longer qualifies for Title 1 funding. The rate of attendance is currently 94.4% which is slightly higher than both similar and other City schools.

Park Slope Elementary School is an empowerment school. Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is run by a well respected and excellent principal.
- The commitment of the staff creates a wonderful learning environment.
- The students are polite, respectful and are generally well behaved.
- The school is well supported by parents eager for their children to learn and achieve.
- The school enrichment program, for all students, is an excellent model of collaborative working.
- Throughout the entire building there are art work displays of the highest standard.
- Increasing use of data is providing information for learning and developing a holistic approach to the development of the students.

What the school needs to improve

- Generate data to further inform instruction against sub groups, for example, gender and the high performers.
- Set appropriate and challenging goals that can be broken down into workable and measurable action plans.
- Place greater emphasis on differentiated instruction and learning across the whole school curriculum.
- Establish effective monitoring strategies to demonstrate overall improvement in outcomes.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The principal's actions are a constant reminder that hard work, a love of education and dedication can achieve high standards. Over the past few years there has been significant progress on all measurable outcomes in every grade from kindergarten through 5. The principal is uncompromising in her quest for excellence and has the full support of her staff in aiming high to raise standards. The support of the staff is much valued and appreciated by the principal in continuously moving the school forward.

A feature of the school is the way it approaches the holistic education of its students. It is determined that all of them are exposed from entry into the school to a wide range of high end learning and enrichment activities. The program, introduced over the last two years, includes a positive contribution from all staff and a number of parents and community volunteers. The results are now being seen with outstanding art work, music and chess and physical education teams, plus innumerable other engaging activities. The parents are a strong and growing group of people who actively support the work of the school in its quest to raise the achievements of their children.

Data interrogation is used very effectively to inform decision making at all levels, be it for individual improvement or whole school developments. However, this is a successful school and it is constantly challenging itself to use data to impact further on overall achievement. The collaborative nature of team work and teaching is very strong throughout all grade levels.

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 well developed.

A good range of both informal and formal data is collected to show the students' academic and personal development. The school creates its own monthly data and uses it to supplement City and State data. Regular assessments are gathered from the Princeton Review and shared across all grades and for individual teachers to further focus their instruction. Both the literacy and mathematics coaches have very detailed and diagnostic data of each student, classroom and grade level to quickly identify patterns and trends which might affect learning. This detail is shared in collaborative grade level meetings and professional development activities around students' work. This helps to ensure greater consistency and increase the reliability of teacher generated data. With the data collected from non academic activities, like the special enrichment program and attendance, the school has built up a very strong picture of each student.

Data is disaggregated to identify the progress of English language learners, special education students and those from different ethnic backgrounds, but not the same rigor is

applied to gender or the higher achievers. Comparisons are being made with the school's own year to year performance and that of similar schools, as well as for each grade level and the teachers within that grade. This is having the affect of providing the school with new and more effective ways of finding patterns and trends but more importantly resolving ways to improve instruction.

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 well developed.

The principal places a great deal of professional trust in her staff to deliver high quality education for all its students. She clearly articulates the goals for the whole school and individual grades by stipulating percentage increases, year to year, based on the data available. This has had the effect of teachers working collaboratively to ensure progress is significant and realistic with data clearly informing their work. As a result of this collaborative working, students' groupings can be altered rapidly to meet individual need. This is a particular strength when analyzing the data of specific groups like English language learners and special education students. A monthly assessment sheet is sent home to parents in addition to the formal school report cards. A number of parental workshops have been held to make them more informed and able to support their child's learning. This also includes access to a school internet portal for further contact with staff and to look up homework assignments.

Literacy and mathematics coaches support staff and students. Data is also used to identify students in greatest need of improvement and closely monitored allowing for changes to take place following a close analysis of the data. They are then provided academic intervention services. The students are aware of their individual progress and the impact it has in ensuring the continued success of their school and will articulate at length what is expected of them. There are comparatively small numbers of special education students, but planning for them is as detailed as for those in general education, with very high expectations required of them. The success of this approach has had a positive impact in other areas of the school and is helping to improve the overall standards being achieved.

There is a school wide expectation that the students are in school to achieve as high as possible in all aspects of their work and celebration of that achievement is acknowledged widely and regularly.

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 principal adapts curriculum programs to best suit the needs of her staff and students to ensure further and continued success by the use of curriculum maps which generate meaningful information to impact upon instruction. There is strong evidence to support curriculum programs are adjusted in response to needs identified in both qualitative and quantitative data. The staff have a large part to play in curriculum design and are

appreciative of having their thoughts and ideas listened to by the principal. The data compiled from various testing mechanisms inform much of their work. Where specific issues arise, use of professional development is made whether internally or externally. Staff continuously share new found knowledge with their colleagues to improve instruction.

Curriculum maps are evaluated annually, using a method of backward planning which is both reflective and goal setting for the coming academic year. These maps are adjusted in response to new quantitative and qualitative data as it becomes available. The coaches regularly work with grade level teachers to undertake this work. The school does not yet differentiate all lessons with the same rigor as it does other aspects of its work. However there is evidence it takes place in some classrooms and grade levels.

The principal has a great capacity for imaginatively using her budget and has managed to provide monies for staff, in terms of instruction and resources, which have clearly impacted upon the educational opportunities of the students. Similarly teachers who are deemed from the data not to be giving the instruction required to develop and move their students forward have been withdrawn from the classroom and given extra professional development and support. This has caused scheduling concerns but the principal is adamant that the students must get the best possible education and is prepared to make these difficult decisions. The students are eager and willing learners and actively participate in their lessons, taking every opportunity to explain their work and the progress they are making.

Attendance is a high priority of the school and unexplained or patterns of unexplained absence are followed up swiftly by support staff. There are many initiatives in place to celebrate those students who attend regularly and the honor board is one of particular note and much valued by the students. Relationships between staff and students are very strong and the students feel that there is always an adult in the school who they can turn for guidance.

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 well developed.

The principal is well respected by the entire school community and she knows all her students by name. At all times her professionalism reflects her ability to act as a significant change agent. She is a strong advocate of the holistic approach to education and when appointing new staff expects them to endorse this philosophy as well. She is building a team of individuals who appreciate and understand that their students can succeed in life by being given a positive and encouraging start. Hence, appointments are made based on the teachers' high expectations of being able to develop the whole child and their commitment to using data to meet the potential of each student.

The staff feel valued and respect the professional freedom and integrity the principal gives them to carry out their work. There are excellent opportunities for professional development both within the school and outside and with the use of external consultants. The data and professional development generated from these ventures are impacting upon instruction as it is differentiated and increases the confidence and competence of the staff. The principal and coaches regularly undertake informal observations as well as those of a more formal nature. This is often as a result of data analysis highlighting a particular issue or as part of a planned and proactive program to achieve the school's

goals. There are processes and programs in place for inter visitation to take place not only between grade level teachers but across the entire staff. This is demonstrated by the cross curricula school enrichment program. There are excellent and well established working relationships between general education staff and the academic intervention services. The school is well managed and organized, to facilitate learning. The principal demonstrates her significant capacity to manage continuous improvement to the entire school community on a daily basis.

The school has outstanding links with the wider community through high calibre academic, cultural and sporting organizations. The opportunities created by this are second to none and as such they significantly enhance and widen the educational opportunities of the students at this school.

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 very clear vision of how goals should be set and the measures necessary to demonstrate success in achieving them. However, her understanding of the way effective monitoring takes place is not yet sufficiently disseminated throughout the whole school. Checks against the Comprehensive Education Plan are undertaken during the year and any variances are addressed accordingly by the revision of individual student, class or grade level goals to show progress towards overall targets. There is substantial evidence to show monitoring takes place between members of each grade level at their weekly meetings and this plays an important part in highlighting individual and grade level concerns. However, this does not pay sufficient attention to the overall picture of what is needed to move the whole school forward, especially in the areas of gender and higher achieving students. The school does not yet break its overall goals into accountable action plans to demonstrate a rigorous process of monitoring is achieved.

Grade level teachers, the administration and academic intervention team meet regularly to discuss the effectiveness of the delivery of instructional programs. The work undertaken in the June Planning process evaluates the goals and plans and is integral to informing the next planning cycle.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Park Slope Elementary School (PS 282)	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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	