



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Elijah G Stroud School

Public School 316

**750 Classon Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11238**

Principal: Ms Tracy Collins

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Reviewer: John Francis

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The school is located in the Prospect Heights area of Brooklyn and after two years of changes to its structure, is now an elementary school from pre-kindergarten to grade 5. In total there are 430 students enrolled with 5% more males than females. Sixteen percent of students are special education students and 5% are English language learners. The students are predominantly Black (85%), with around 12% Hispanic and less than 1% White. There are very small numbers of other ethnic groups. Attendance, while improving, remains below the average for the City and for similar schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The leadership has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is using this information well to give direction to the work of the school.
- The principal, well supported by the leadership and professional development teams, is clearly focused on school improvement and has introduced many positive initiatives that are driving the school forward.
- The wide range of data collected is particularly well developed for identifying the needs of students and preparing effective intervention programs to support their learning.
- The management of students' behavior and personal development is good; it raises students' self-esteem and commitment to education.
- The school has a calm and purposeful tone brought about by a clearly defined set of expectations for students and staff.
- The school has a positive culture that is recognized and appreciated by students, parents and teachers and takes every opportunity to celebrate good attitudes and success.
- Relationships between parents and the school are very positive and supportive with the growing contribution parents make to the life of the school bringing great benefits to their children.

What the school needs to improve

- Be more systematic and focused about what the school's main goals are and how essential data will be gathered, recorded and used.
- Use the data currently available more effectively to improve instruction and give a closer alignment of work to students' needs, particularly for those who achieve at the higher levels.
- Make the grade level rubrics more understandable to students so they can be more involved in grading themselves and know clearly how to progress in their learning.
- Raise the overall quality of instruction to the best seen in the school by increasing the opportunities for professional development, involving classroom visits with peer observations and support.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The school is rapidly developing its understanding of how data can influence students' progress and achievement. Clear direction by the principal and commitment by all teachers ensures that students have the best possible opportunities to succeed. With the work that has gone on over the last two years there is an established culture in the school. Students respond to well planned instruction, enjoy the challenges provided by the teachers, work hard and show good behavior and attitudes. Parents are positive about the improvements to the school over time and work hard with the school to provide a high level of support for the benefit of all students.

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 principal, well supported by the leadership team and the recently formed professional development team, is clearly focused on school improvement. They have introduced many positive initiatives, particularly the emphasis on data collection and analysis. Through using this wide range of data, the leadership has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is using this well to give direction to the work of the school and make rapid progress in whole school development. The data collected are appropriate.

The focus of data gathering is changing to give greater emphasis to the detailed analysis of the results from developmental reading assessments and early childhood literacy assessment system scores. This information is also used to inform the targets in the school's Comprehensive Education Plan. The data gathered over the last two years is beginning to provide the school with a more comprehensive view of students' strengths and weaknesses, in specific reading and writing skills, and track their progress. This information is beginning to be used more widely across the school but is not yet consistent across all classes and grades. The records currently held on individual students are not yet sufficiently sophisticated to allow for easy tracking over time and target setting as many are recorded in a number of different places and formats.

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 undeveloped.

The school gathers a wide range of data that it is beginning to use to identify their specific needs and improve the performance of all students. This is most effective when used for identifying the needs of students and preparing effective intervention programs to support their learning. The performance of these students is carefully measured and recorded over time to monitor their progress. This is not yet the norm for other students. Here, the school is at the early stages of setting goals at all levels as not all teachers are fully conversant with analyzing the relevant data.

While there are clear numerical targets in the Comprehensive Education Plan, there is not yet a wholly clear view of what the school aims to achieve over time and how it will achieve this. The use of this data is not yet sufficiently systematic or focused. The school has not yet gathered all the data needed to determine which areas affect students’ learning across the grade levels. This interpretation and use of data is not yet embedded in all teachers’ work or the school’s routines. Determination of what are the most important data needed to drive progress, and how to gather, record and use the information has yet to be established. Some of the draft proposals for collecting and recording data are too onerous to be used to interpret it easily. A simplified system would allow the data currently available to be used more effectively to improve the differentiation in teachers’ planning and instruction. At present, the close alignment of work to students’ needs, most particularly for those who achieve at the highest levels, is undeveloped.

The parent coordinator works well with the parent teacher association to increase parental involvement. Parent-teacher conferences are very well attended. A wide program of parent workshops involves parents in a range of school-related activities. An informative parents’ handbook and regular newsletter are produced. However, this does not yet contain important items in the home languages of the students in the school, which would be helpful to many parents.

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.

Teachers share and calibrate students’ work, which helps them come to a shared expectation. Classrooms have assessment rubrics prominently displayed for the key subjects so that the students know what they need to do to meet the targets. Teachers regularly refer to these when setting out instructional aims for students. However, more work is needed in reviewing these rubrics as the language used is not particularly student-friendly. As a result, students are not always clear about exactly what it is they need to do to make progress. Students are increasingly involved in the assessment of their own progress, but this is not yet well established practice across the school. Interpreting these rubrics for students would allow the teachers to share them more easily, involve students more actively in grading their own work and give them a greater understanding of what they need to do to achieve success or reach a higher level.

The budget available to the school is targeted well on key areas for school improvement. It is used flexibly to respond to identified needs from evaluations made by the leadership and increasingly effective professional development team. For example, as part of this drive, the school was recently successful in its bid to fund two leading teachers to provide models of good practice for all teachers and lead professional development across the school. This, along with initiatives such as funding foundation study groups, demonstrates a reflective response to professional learning needs.

Attendance remains a little below the City average. However, it is beginning to show improvement, with the current rate up 2% on the previous year's figures. This was achieved through good work by the attendance teacher, the introduction of a range of strategies and incentives and by making regular attendance a promotional issue. All of this is done with the active support of the parents' association. While attendance is improving, punctuality remains a problem for the school and needs to be rigorously tackled.

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.

Most of the staff are experienced and have secure subject knowledge. They are improving their classroom management skills, where necessary, with support from the leadership and each other. All have a great commitment to the students, the school and their colleagues. They work in a very collaborative and supportive way. The school's administration work well together and have a very clear and committed vision for improving standards and learning, which is shared by the whole staff.

There is a clear focus throughout the school on developing the whole student. Much good work has been done since the principal's appointment in 2004 to set a very positive culture and reduce the number and frequency of incidents across the school. The management of student behavior and personal development is good and successful in raising their self-esteem and commitment to education. The school has a calm and purposeful tone brought about by a clearly defined set of expectations for students and staff. This positive culture is recognized and appreciated by students, parents and teachers. Every opportunity is taken to celebrate good attitudes and success. This is supported and enhanced by the relationships between parents and the school. Parents make a positive and growing contribution to the life of the school, which brings great benefits to their children.

The well-developed leadership structure has a common aim of providing the best possible education for all students. This is being promoted through a range of support and development strategies, for example, the creation of an active and well informed professional development team, the appointment of lead teachers, common planning time and grade meetings. Regular learning walks through the school by the leadership team are supportive to teachers and identify areas for further development. However, the opportunities for professional learning based on classroom inter-visitations and peer observations to support are limited and do not sufficiently build on the good practice in the school with the aim of bringing all up the level of the best.

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 leadership team regularly reviews the school education plan and links progress to the goals set out in it. Student achievement has a very high priority. Assessments are reviewed regularly in grade teams and reported back to the administration. This information is also shared with teachers to help shape instruction. There is not yet a clearly defined schedule of assessment and analysis across the school year but this is work in progress.

From the analysis of reading and early childhood assessment results, the school has actively reviewed its approaches to reading, writing and mathematics. The whole curriculum is being re-mapped to focus on greater integration between the skills of literacy and numeracy and other curriculum areas, for example, social studies. Unit planning is being developed well by teachers, following a common template, with opportunities at the end of each unit for re-teaching those elements where students are less successful. The school is also developing greater flexibility in the alignment of work to students' needs. In mathematics, for example, the use of different grade level workbooks allows lower achieving students to work at a level more closely aligned to their needs. Good use of technology-based programs for analyzing the needs of special education and lower achieving students is providing effective plans for their individualized learning. This has led to the creation of more focused group instruction and more appropriate interventions. The impact of these can be seen in the steady fall in the number of students at these lower levels.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Elijah G Stroud School (PS 316)	∅	✓	+
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	