



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public School/Intermediate School 323

**210 Chester Street
Brooklyn
NY 11212**

Principal: Linda L Harris

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School/Intermediate School 323 is a pre-kindergarten through grade 8 school with 523 students enrolled. The population comprises 86% Black and 14% Hispanic students. There are 15% special education students and 3% English language learners. Students newly arrived in the country are mostly from St. Lucia, Guyana, and Jamaica. The school receives Title 1 funding for 90% of its students, which is higher than the average for City and similar schools. The attendance rate is 89.6% which is below the average for City and similar schools. The school building is shared with two other schools that have their own administration and are annexes in nearby schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school gathers a good range of data about its students and compares and analyzes the performance of different groups well.
- Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students found to be in the greatest need of improvement.
- There are excellent relationships amongst students, teachers, parents and the administration of the school.
- Effective strategies are being used to improve attendance across the school.
- The principal is greatly respected by staff, students, parents, and the wider community for her openness and accessibility.
- The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis because of the efficient routines and procedures that are in place.
- Regular observations of teaching by the principal and other administrators help them to make informed decisions about the professional development needs of staff.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities which boosts the social and emotional development of students.
- The school has forged effective partnership with outside organizations to further its academic goals.
- Students show high levels of good behavior and politeness in and out of the classroom.

What the school needs to improve

- Use data to set goals for immediate and long-range improvement and develop plans to measure progress towards achieving them.
- Ensure that all plans contain interim and short-term targets and can be adapted immediately as new information about students' progress becomes available.
- Explore ways of differentiating instruction in the classroom that are more closely aligned to the needs of individual students.
- Consider the impact of professional development on instruction in the classroom and revisit as necessary to effect change.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The school cares deeply about its students. This is apparent by the dedication of the staff and the clear lead given by the principal, whose visibility around the building makes her accessible to all sections of the school community. Much effort goes into gathering quality data, but at present this is not put to best use because goals and plans tend to be too informal. Meetings are regular and productive and the needs of individual students are often addressed well. However, the Comprehensive Education Plan lacks some flexibility in responding to new data as it arises so it is harder to obtain an overview of progress towards the school's goals.

Students enjoy a good range of extra-curricular activities, and their personal and social development is encouraged through strong links with a range of community based organizations. They behave very well and have positive attitudes towards learning. This is because they are always treated with respect, and made to feel important as individuals. Sometimes the instruction is pitched too much at the whole class, which makes it difficult for some students to keep up while higher-achieving students find the work too easy. Relationships across the school are excellent, with good support from parents.

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.

The school collects a wide range of data in a routine and systematic manner. This includes Princeton Review, early childhood literacy assessment system 2, Grow report, early performance assessment in language arts, teacher created assessments, running records and school-wide grade assessments. This data is based on individual student performance and is amalgamated by subject, class and grade. The administration then disaggregates the information into sub-groups such as special education, English language learners, gender and higher achieving students. The implications of the collected data upon student progress are addressed via meetings, memoranda and informal conversations. Small group instruction is based on the results of the assessments.

Teachers talk to individual students about their learning and observe them at work. This data is collected on conference sheets and is used to provide individual instruction for students. In addition, rubrics are used to gauge student performance throughout the middle school and several of the lower school classes. The staff is currently working on creating common rubrics for use throughout the curriculum areas.

The administration compares the school's performance with that of similar schools and looks for trends in the data across classroom, grades and subject areas. They take into account past performance when considering how well the current students are doing.

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 administration, coaches, and lead teachers meet weekly to discuss the implications of instruction and data collected. Although they do not currently set goals for the immediate and long-term improvement of student progress, there is a common sentiment that all students must do their best. Data interpretation is done in collaboration with the administration and coaches. They have identified a need for special education students to perform at higher proficiency levels. The school has plans to create collaborative team teaching classes to help those students who have not responded to academic intervention services. In an effort to prepare for the classes, the school has already provided professional development to over ten teachers.

The school ensures that the students in greatest need academically, emotionally and socially receive additional help. They receive assistance from the classroom teacher, academic intervention services teacher, after-school programs and Saturday program.

The entire school community has high expectations for all students. Conversations are commonly had about students taking their work to the next level and doing better. Parents are notified of their child’s progress via monthly progress reports and city generated report cards. The school routinely contacts parents when areas of concern arise about student achievement or social and emotional growth. However, the outcomes of their discussions are not usually set in written objective measurable goals.

There are clear expectations of what each class and grade are expected to receive on diagnostic assessments. These goals are stated by the principal at the beginning of the school year and reiterated when the assessments are administered. Although there are discussions about individual student progress, there are no tangible plans for objective measurable outcomes.

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 is based on a combination of students’ needs and regional mandates. Periodic assessments are easily aligned to the content area curriculum. In the lower school, the teachers use Open Court phonics, phonemic awareness curriculum guides and a balanced literacy approach to teach reading and writing. The middle school uses reading anthologies to teach reading. Writing is taught by focusing on one theme unit each month. Teachers are provided packets of instructional material to assist with the teaching of persuasive essays, poetry, narrative writing and other units. The Everyday Mathematics curriculum is used in the lower school and Impact Mathematics is used in the middle school.

Students are actively engaged, although there is sometimes limited differentiation of instruction in theory and practice. Weekly comprehension skill packets are school-wide initiatives and are not aligned to individualized plans for students or periodic assessment analysis. The school ensures that students complete the State mandate of twenty-five books read per year, by providing books from a regionally created book list. The books are aligned to the social studies and science curriculum but do not take into consideration the reading levels of individual students. Teacher accountability for improving instruction is not consistent throughout the school.

Budgeting, staffing, and scheduling decisions are made to meet the needs of students and staff. The administration makes every effort to meet teachers' requests for materials. Funding is used to provide professional development for the staff. The principal has contracted the Ramapo Consultant Group and a private consultant to provide stress management techniques for staff. There is an English as a second language teacher who provides mandated services to English language learners and other students in need. Teachers are provided with common preparation periods several times a week to meet together in grades.

Administrators are often seen around the school and are approachable to students and staff alike. The dedication of the staff is unflinching as they provide student clubs and additional tutoring to address academic and social issues. The teachers are respectful of students and this is reciprocated. This leads to a positive environment that is conducive to learning. The administrators, family workers and teachers work together to highlight good attendance practices which is resulting in increased attendance for the school.

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.

There is a conscious effort to ensure that the staff selected to work in the school have high expectations of student performance and progress and are fully committed to its work. Potential teachers are expected to do a demonstration lesson. Teachers present positive role models to the students, as many of them either live in the community or attended the school themselves as children.

The school collects data reflecting the teaching and learning in the school through formal and informal observations. The principal has implemented surveying the staff three times a year which provides the administrative team with valuable feedback about professional development needs. Teachers regularly meet with administrators to discuss the observations. The coaches and administration readily make professional development determinations based on the common trends of students' performance. For example, the school recognizes the need to provide professional development to all staff on how to align the State standards to the Core Knowledge program which structures the social studies and science curriculum. Professional development decisions are also based on parental feedback and teacher surveys. Staff members participate in workshops conducted outside the school and parents participate in workshops provided by Learning Links and other agencies. Teachers participate in intra and inter-visitations of other classes and schools in an effort to recognize high quality instruction. Also, the instructional team conducts learning walks which results in model lessons and professional development workshops. Administrators do not yet take fully into account the impact of professional development on classroom practice when they undertake observations of lessons.

Staff teams meet regularly to evaluate and revise plans. Teachers and administrators work collaboratively to use what they learn about each other's goals and results to drive school improvement.

The school runs very smoothly because there are clear routines and expectations that are followed by all. These are communicated through the morning announcements and notices sent to parents. The principal is well respected by the whole school community. The school partners with several community based organizations to provide extensive after-school programs which work with the students and the community until very late at night. The students also benefit from the partnerships during the school day where they receive services in the arts.

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.

Administrators use the Comprehensive Education Plan to guide their work during the school year. They revisit it to ensure that instruction is aligned with the plan. However, it does not include interim progress goals. Where interim assessments and diagnostic assessments are included, for example in some pacing calendars, they do not contain timeframes and measurable outcomes that are formally communicated to all. These are then applied inconsistently and the impact of the data they generate is reduced.

The information provided by the interim data leads to a comparison of student progress within and across the classrooms. The school is flexible in providing intervention services to students who are not initially identified but show poor progress based on the interim data. The school makes informal changes in its practice to address the needs of these particular students but the plan itself is not formally revised.

Although the school community informally discuss the effectiveness of planned materials, there are no provisions in the plan to evaluate the impact of changes to the curriculum. For example, after the recent purchase of a middle school basal reader, the program had to be temporarily set aside when the teachers discovered that the content was too difficult for the students and more professional development would be needed to deliver it effectively.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School/Intermediate School 323	∅	✓	+
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		