



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Philippa Schuyler School**

**Intermediate School 383**

**1300 Greene Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11237**

**Principal: Barbara Sanders**

**Dates of review: May 16 – 18, 2007**

**Reviewer: Derek Pattinson**

## **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

This school is located in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn and is designated for students from grades 5 to 8 who are gifted and talented. The school does not receive Title 1 funding. All students must pass an entrance exam for admission and as a result many students travel from different parts of the City. Although numbers have fallen there is generally low mobility in and out of the school. In total there are 1330 students of which 4% are special education students and 2% are English language learners. The student population is predominantly Black, 72%, with 25% Hispanic, 4% Asian and 1% from other ethnic backgrounds. Attendance at 95% is well above the average for City and similar schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The varied curriculum, with its strong emphasis on learning a second language, motivates students well and helps account for the high level of attendance.
- The different cultures happily co-exist in school and greatly respect each other.
- The principal is well respected by staff, students and parents and has demonstrated the capacity to lead change.
- The performing and visual arts department provides an exemplary showcase for students' talents.
- The administrative team and cabinet lead improvements effectively and ensure that the school runs smoothly.
- Parents are strongly supportive of the school and its work.
- The school uses data well to help monitor students' performance in State tests.
- The development of expressive language is high profile in the school's work.
- Adults have very good relationships with students who consequently feel confident about asking for help.

### What the school needs to do to improve

- Improve teachers' ability to use data analysis effectively to inform their planning for accelerating progress of subgroups, especially the highest achieving students.
- Use data analysis to set short-term goals for students to help accelerate learning and develop self- and peer-assessments to give students greater ownership of what they need to do to improve.
- Prioritize and sharpen goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan so that progress towards their achievement can be regularly and rigorously tracked.
- Provide more opportunities within and across grades for teachers to discuss students' progress and consider all aspects of their development.
- Formally establish systems for monitoring the impact of professional development on classroom strategies and student outcomes.
- Increase the opportunities for students and teachers to use technology to accelerate student progress.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

**This is a proficient school.**

'To Whom Much is Given, Much is Required' is the basis for the school's beliefs, and certainly the principal, cabinet and all teachers are committed to the school and its students. They receive good support from parents, who are proud of their school. In response to this vision, the school has adopted a curriculum which all students enjoy. Performance and visual arts, the development of expressive language and the emphasis on the acquisition of a second language are strong features. Providing opportunities for students to select activities encourages them to come to school, which helps to explain the high levels of attendance.

There are many enrichment opportunities to help learning come alive, which also helps to motivate them. However, teachers are not yet looking at the differences in the achievement of different groups of students to help ensure that all are achieving as well as they should. Technology resources are too few to help teachers with data analysis and instruct students in important life skills.

The principal is well liked and respected by staff, students and parents and has demonstrated the capacity to lead change. She is well supported by a team of committed teachers and a cabinet which leads improvement and ensures that the school runs smoothly. Relationships are strong and so students are confident to ask an adult for help and advice about any academic or personal concern.

### 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's designation as a school for gifted and talented students and its selection procedure ensure that data collection starts early. A test is administered to all students soon after their arrival to determine what they know and understand. This is because students come from all over the City and progress records vary in quality. Information obtained from this test is used to identify special education students and English language learners so that appropriate intervention strategies can be planned for them. The school uses the data from the State and City tests well and generates its own data from tests administered internally. As a result, it has a secure understanding of student performance each year in mathematics and English language arts.

As students move through the school, much performance data is accumulated to help teachers identify progress and track students' achievements. This enables them to plan what individual students need to focus on to make further progress, including special education students. The recently formed quality review team has started to study and use data to compare the performances of students, and to ask questions about why some students from similar starting points show accelerated progress when compared to others.

However, the school does not yet use data analysis to identify trends in the achievements of different groups of students to enable them to align instruction to help accelerate progress. Although it uses data to look at trends and patterns over time, it does not do enough to measure performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools. For example, English language learners are performing less well in English language arts and mathematics than those in City and similar schools, but this has not prompted the school to set clear goals for improvement. However, the school has begun to look at gender differences in performances, although this work is embryonic.

**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 commitment of the principal and staff to their students, and the high expectations they have for them, underpins the setting of goals, the actions required to meet them and the drive for improvement. The school sets goals from its summative assessments, which are analyzed and disaggregated, and are used to help track the progress of students over time. Special education students, English language learners and students identified from data as being at risk are set appropriate targets, with additional intervention programs established for them where necessary. Workshops with parents have begun on how to study and use data.

Students know their individual goals, which are communicated to parents so they have ownership in what their child must do to improve. Regular meetings about these students enable tracking of their progress towards the goals set. However, electronic tracking, which shows not only how well students are doing but can show clearly the performances of different groups, is not yet used as a powerful tool to accelerate students’ learning. There are classroom portfolios of work that travel through the school with students, but these do not show progress well enough and are not sufficiently well used to allow for easy tracking over time and accurate target setting.

Most students have goals, which in broad terms are suited to their needs. However, students are not involved enough in setting and reviewing their goals so that they have ownership in what they must do next in order to improve. Furthermore, many goals are not sharp enough, short-term or challenging for the highest achievers to help accelerate their learning. This is a view supported by parents who would like more involvement in the school’s setting of goals and establishment of a school vision.

Students are not yet involved enough in reviewing their own or their peers’ work to help them understand what they are doing well and what needs doing next to help them establish clear goals. The Comprehensive Education Plan does not contain the percentages of students expected to reach levels 3 and 4 in English language arts, mathematics and science to enable teachers to regularly check on progress towards their achievement.

**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 varied instructional programs and the different approaches used by teachers with their students help to account for students' high attendance, involvement and interest. The curriculum celebrates cultural diversity, and as a result there are good relationships among the school's diverse population. Adults too have very good relationships with their students, and students feel confident asking for help. Students enjoy coming to school because they have opportunity to select elective courses as well as the five major mandated subjects. They know and trust their teachers. Talents are nurtured and encouraged.

The performance and visual arts department provides an exemplary showcase for students' talents, such as at the spring concert. All students learn French or Spanish which reflects and contributes to the rich cultural diversity of the neighborhood. The many enrichment activities and extracurricular experiences, such as the camping trip, help bring the curriculum to life for students and break down barriers between subjects to accelerate learning. Expressive language has been a recent focus and is now very well represented in the school's work. However, programs and enrichment activities are not always aligned to the needs of all students, especially the highest achievers, to help them improve their performance.

The school's budgeting, scheduling and staffing decisions are based on analysis of data to support its goals. For example, good staffing support for special education students and English language learners ensures they benefit from individualized programs.

Attendance is a high priority for the school; there are rigorous procedures in place and any unexplained absence is very thoroughly followed up. Teachers are fully aware of their accountability for the achievements of the students in their care. They want their students to do well and often use performance data to inform their instructional programs. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge which often underpins some lively instruction, resulting in positive engagement from the students. However, because goals are not always sharp enough, opportunities for greater differentiation through group work are sometimes missed. As a result, some students are not as actively involved in the lesson as others.

**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 experienced principal is very well respected by the whole of the school community for her drive and vision for the school. She is recognized as having developed a school where learning and respect for others are paramount and which establishes a firm foundation for the future. In doing this, she has been careful to select staff who share her vision and high expectations. The principal demonstrates a significant capacity to effect change. For example, she has overseen the introduction of a commercial program which is effectively helping students to build their confidence and develop skills of self-assessment. A range of external consultants provide additional expertise, which help the school to achieve its

academic goals. The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis with clear routines that are well understood and followed by the whole community.

Professional development including arrangements to observe classroom teaching are integrated within the school's work and seen as an essential tool to help accelerate learning. For example, the quality review team is planning more professional surveys to provide a greater focus on differentiated activities. However, peer observations among teachers to disseminate good practice are at an early stage of development. Professional development is not focused enough on helping teachers use data analysis effectively to align instruction to the abilities of all groups of students, especially the high achievers. Although some collaboration occurs, students rightly believe that more is needed between and across grades to discuss their progress and their 'all-round' development. Systems for monitoring the impact of professional development on classroom strategies and student outcomes are not formally established.

**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.**

The annual goals for the school are clearly identified within the Comprehensive Education Plan, which has been compiled by the school leadership team, ensuring that there is a broad understanding of what expectations for students are and the actions required to achieve them. There is a clear meeting structure, including cabinet and grade level meetings, which facilitate the ongoing evaluation of progress towards the goals identified. In English language arts there is much use of grade level rubrics to facilitate learning. The school has introduced arrangements for students to comment on different teaching styles which suit them so that practices can be adapted to students' needs. The cabinet scrutinizes data systematically to ensure that special education students and those at risk are working towards their targets. There is much celebration of school successes and students' progress to maintain high morale as the school moves forward to embrace new challenges.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is an extensive document, containing numerous goals to help drive the school forward. However, many goals are not precise enough to enable progress towards their achievement to be carefully tracked. There is an over-dependence on summative testing as a means of tracking progress. The school is introducing more frequent grade conferences to help record data and information on students' progress to establish a more informed overview of students' "all-round" development. Progress in tests is systematically recorded and teachers have some information to identify specific weaknesses in conceptual understanding or skills. However, diagnostic measures of progress are not yet used often enough to help identify where help is most needed. Established interim goals are beginning to be modified to take account of new evidence. As a result, teachers are starting to refine their instructional programs so that they meet fully the range of needs within the class. The principal recognizes that there is still has some way to go to adapt plans and practices to meet its more focused goals to accelerate learning. However, a firm platform has been established for the school to build further on its achievements.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: PHILIPPA SCHUYLER (IS 383)</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		