



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Conselyea Preparatory School**

**Middle School 577**

**320 Manhattan Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11211**

**Principal: Maria Masullo**

**Dates of review: April 19 - 20, 2007**

**Reviewer: Carol Foresta**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Conselyea Preparatory School is located in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. This sixth through eighth grade school serves a population of 344 students from diverse backgrounds. The majority of the students (65%) are Hispanic, 19% of the students are White, 10% are Black, and 6.1% are Asian and other ethnicities.

Just over 6% of the students have individualized educational plans and receive the full continuum of services including special education teacher support services, and integrated inclusion services. Additionally, just over 3% of the students are English language learners, with Spanish as the dominant language. More than 66.9% of the students are Title 1 eligible which is average for City schools. At 94.3% student attendance is above the average for similar schools and schools City wide.

Conselyea Preparatory is at 119% capacity. Most classes average 30 students or above. The school has an excellent reputation in the district but its modular buildings lack room for expansion. In addition, the school does not have a gymnasium, auditorium or library.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is a well respected, hard working and reflective leader of this community.
- The students feel they are known well and are safe and respected in their school.
- Most of the teachers are experienced, supportive and function well as a team.
- New teachers are embraced and benefit from the internal expertise and wisdom of colleagues.
- Teachers meet weekly in congruence groups to plan, exchange information and analyze data for students they share.
- Student work, bearing appropriate comments, is proudly displayed in all classrooms as well as in all hallways.
- Classroom instruction is engaging and students are focused and productive, enjoying opportunities to work independently and collaboratively.
- The school has put systems in place to use data generated by state examinations as well as by teacher made assessments.
- Excellent attendance is seen as a priority in the school and students are welcomed and actively encouraged to be present by the administrators and teachers.
- The school has built useful partnerships with Progress High School and various agencies which provide additional services for students.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to establish a balanced literacy program across grade level and subject areas, including science, and mathematics.
- Continue to research and implement academic intervention programs which will provide individualized support and instruction for students most in need.
- Pursue and increase community and parental involvement in supporting the work of the school.
- Deepen the capacity of teachers to analyze data and use it effectively to drive instruction.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

Conselyea is a well-organized and highly functional school. The principal and her cabinet work efficiently together as a team. They have their hands on the pulse of the school as well as on the needs of the community. Teachers and administrators clearly understand the needs of the students and are respected as well as supported in their work. The school works hard to maintain ongoing and up-to-date relationships with individual families as well as with the community as a whole.

The school has new systems in place to track, record and follow the progress of the students. There is evidence that the teachers are effectively conferencing and collecting data from the students they teach and the school is well placed to use data to drive instruction.

High expectations are the norm at this school. The students expect to work hard and their teachers expect them to do well. A core group of active parents are consistently involved and connected with the school. However, the school has had difficulty getting the larger parent group engaged and participating in the work of the school.

Because the school is generally high performing it is popular in the district. Currently it is at 119% capacity, which has strained the space constraints of the school. Parents, teachers and students all complained of the lack of facilities and their knowledge that they could improve their performance if there was more space and the opportunity to have smaller class size.

### 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.**

Data from the State, including from Grow reports, is gathered and divided into departmental reports. This helps staff to understand what the students' weaknesses are and create an overview of each child. The school gives three or four practice tests each year, which are modeled on the State tests. As a result, the school effectively uses item analysis to predict how well the students will do on the upcoming tests and to support the students in their efforts to do better.

Teachers meet together twice a week, and sometimes more often, to discuss the analysis of data and to decide what items to work on in their classes. For example, the teachers might decide that the students lack a coherent way to do character analysis. The teachers will work as a team to enhance this ability in their students, for example by taking students in at lunch time or after school to work on particular skills. Teachers also work individually with students in conferences each week. These meetings confirm what the teachers "think the students know and what they need to know." The teachers will then use this

information to group the students and to offer remediation to students who need it. In this way the school effectively utilizes available data to support and monitor the progress of each child, class and grade level. The school has effectively used data to identify higher-achieving students and it provides appropriate academic support for them within an honors class in each grade.

The school has effectively used data to identify students with special needs and has dedicated appropriate support for them within a Collaborative Team Teaching class in grade 6. The school is aware that there is too little support during the day for English language learners with special needs.

The school knows that its test results in grade 8 compare favorably with other schools in the City but nevertheless seeks to improve, for example by using inter-visitations to other schools to increase the schools strength in mathematics. The school does not at present compare all of its results with those of other schools in the district or the region. However, the school is well placed to do this as new systems to analyze data are in place.

**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.**

In grade, departmental and academic intervention strategy meetings teachers and administrators talk about student progress. The data collected is used as a tool to assist teachers in planning and differentiating instruction more effectively for students. In this way, the school operates in a collaborative process to set demanding and measurable goals for both immediate and long term improvement and to establish plans and timeframes for reaching these goals.

The school is working on incorporating balanced literacy across all subject areas although consistency is not yet fully established. All of the teachers see group work as being important and are using accountable talk. When the teachers meet as a group they look at each other’s conference logs and lesson plans in order to judge whether the school’s plans are being carried out and goals are being achieved.

In the beginning of the school year the entire staff reviews the Comprehensive Educational Plan. The goals from this plan are the priorities for the coming school year. Teachers establish their own goals for their classes and students write their goals. During extended home room class time, which functions as a form of advisory class, teachers review their goals and expectations with the students.

With the exception of grade 6, the school has not yet identified ways of supporting those students who are in the greatest need of support. However, staff are researching which academic intervention program will be most effective in reaching out to these students for next year. At present students with special educational needs do not receive academic intervention appropriate to their specific needs.

High expectations are the norm at this school. The students expect to work hard and their teachers expect them to do well. The school has built a system for establishing effective communication with parents and caregivers through grade orientations for parents at the start of the year and a useful student handbook which explains goals and expectations and

the school's grading system. A core group of active parents are consistently involved and connected with the school. However, the school has had difficulty getting the larger parent group engaged and participating in its work.

**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 uses the Teachers College curriculum, maintaining consistency with the curriculum in use on the lower school site. The school has customized this curriculum with additional reading materials. A well-structured program focusing on literacy, including elements of reading and writing, is in place. Students are beginning to devise their own rubrics to help them know precisely what they need to improve in order to be more successful readers and writers. Student work is prominently displayed with commentary by the teachers.

Teachers are held accountable through the use of formal observations of teaching and by scrutiny of their records of conferences with students. By scheduling lessons in 90 minute blocks, project and experimental is being encouraged and student motivation is increasing. Students are engaged in their learning by participating in group-work time and working collaboratively, for example when analyzing poetry in Language Arts class and during experiments in science lessons. While group learning is relatively new to the school it is being effectively used in most classes.

The students trust the staff and know that they can get help if they need it. They feel respected and consequently give back the respect they get from the staff and the administration. There is an elaborate merit and demerit system in place which motivates students effectively. Student attendance is a high priority in this school. Students and parents agree that the school is tough on absent students. Homes are called and notes are demanded.

**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 cabinet is involved in hiring new staff. In this way the people who need to work with the new teacher feel invested in their success and can share their commitment and capacity to use data to improve instruction from the outset. New faculty are chosen because of their competence and experience. Since most are experienced teachers, the school functions smoothly on a daily basis.

The school intends to apply the balanced literacy approach across the curriculum in all subject areas. The classes are becoming more interactive and the students are definitely more engaged as a result.

Teachers are eager to participate in professional development opportunities. The staff is invested in using the Teachers College methodology and is learning to use differentiated instruction. There is a good balance between professional development which uses

internal expertise and that which make use of outside agencies. This year all four mathematics teachers benefited from a mathematics conference in Atlanta which enabled them to improve teaching to better meet the students' needs.

The principal frequently visits classes to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. She gives constructive feedback to teachers through the use of a clear checklist which employs a rubric. Teachers have opportunities to look at each other's plans and classroom environment.

The school evaluates its work every three months. The teachers use reflection notebooks to describe their goals and how they will meet them. There is regular sharing of student work in order to see what standards are being met. The teachers question whether the students understand what standards really mean and clearly review the rubrics they use with the students.

The principal is respected and trusted by parents, teachers and students. She works well with all constituencies, is a visible presence in the school and has the capacity to make change, as shown in the movement towards more inter-active teaching throughout the building. The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all and are generally followed. Communication with parents is excellent.

The school enjoys partnerships with Progress High School, School Settlement House, and Beacon of Williamsburg. These agencies provide enrichment opportunities for students as well as space for athletic activities.

**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 uses the item skills analysis and the Princeton Review to assess students five times a year and teachers revise their plans based on what they learn from these assessments. Teachers also keep a record of student achievement at the midpoint and at the end of each marking period and keep parents informed. The guidance teacher reviews the student report cards and compares student progress within and across classrooms.

Information generated by these periodic assessments is used by teachers to revise their plans, re-teach if necessary and spiral back or provide remediation for students who need it. This is demonstrated in mathematics classes where teachers learned from the data that students needed more support in geometry and they re-grouped them, and could continue with small group instruction where re-teaching was employed.

Plans are modified by what teachers learn from the data-base they have accumulated. These systems are new but the school is now better placed to build the capacity of the teachers to analyze and utilize the data they collect to drive instruction.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Conselyea Preparatory (MS577)</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	