



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

John Melser Charrette School

Public School 3

**490 Hudson Street
New York
NY 10014**

Principal: Lisa Siegman

Dates of review: January 31 - February 1, 2007

Reviewer: Denis Pittman

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 3 provides an education for children from pre-kindergarten through to grade 5. There are 550 students enrolled. The ethnic composition of the school is 55.4% White, 17.8% Black, 17.2% Hispanic and 7.3% Asian students. There are relatively few students who are English language learners (4.5%) compared to similar and City schools. Special education students form 17.2% of the population. The school does not receive Title 1 funding.

The school was founded in the early 1970s by a group of teachers and parents-residents of Greenwich Village and Soho. The school has active parental and community support.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The leadership team is very effective in creating a supportive but challenging learning environment for both students and teachers.
- The very strong partnership with the local community is instrumental in providing a range of interesting experiences for students.
- The arts program and extracurricular activities are a successful and stimulating extension to the curriculum.
- A strong team ethos has been created in the school; teachers are very supportive and encouraging of each other.
- The parents are actively involved in the school and are willing to help in a variety of ways.
- The relationship between staff and students is respectful and positive.
- The monitoring and evaluation of students' progress is very effective.
- Students enjoy coming to the school; they speak very positively of the help and encouragement they get from teachers.
- Professional development supports the goals and objectives of the school very well.

What the school needs to improve

- Make clear the connection between interim and long-term goals in order to provide a strategic overview of the school's improvement planning.
- Develop student skills in self-assessment.
- Continue to focus upon improving attendance levels and punctuality.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

The original founders believed that learning should be active and school should be an adventure for all involved. These guiding principles are reflected in the current practice of John Melser Charrette School. The school provides an exciting and interesting environment for children to learn in. The shared educational values of the principal and assistant principal pervade the school's activities and provide clear purpose and direction. It is a school that stresses creativity, individuality, and social awareness.

The support and care of each individual child is central to the school's work. Teachers are very supportive and are willing to help and encourage students and parents support the school well. They are very appreciative of the stimulating learning environment which is being created and value greatly the progress their children make. The curriculum is designed to reflect and build upon students' interests and is very successful in engaging them. The working relationship with the local community including institutes of higher education is very productive in promoting the goals of the school. Given the dedicated commitment, enthusiasm and hard work of staff, the school has the capacity to sustain its established pattern of continuous improvement.

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 has a substantive range of standard tests and formal assessments which are compiled to provide data on the academic and personal development of all students. The New York City tests are studied and analyzed to identify trends and potential areas for improvement. The school performs well in relation to these standards, and has identified extended writing as a focus for improvement.

The school also generates a significant amount of assessment data which is based upon standardized programs, for example, the ECLAS assessments. These diagnostic tests effectively utilize an item analysis to identify student competencies in mathematics and literacy. The formative assessment of students compiled by teachers is very detailed and comprehensive. Each teacher has assessment information of the basic skills of individual students which constitute a running record of achievement. The school has established a coherence and consistency to its assessment data by requiring teachers to produce a portfolio of work for each child.

The school is aware of trends in the data of groups of students related to ethnicity and those who are English language learners. Although the latter group is quite small, the analysis of their needs is detailed. A particular strength of the school is the very effective diagnostic analysis of the needs of special education students. This information is used well to schedule the instructional needs of these children. The staff are also provided with a comprehensive breakdown of strategies for supporting these students in the classroom.

Overall, the analysis of its own data is very robust and rigorous. The comparison of performance with similar schools does not have such a strong focus for the school as the nature of the data related to these schools is not so evident. Data in relation to past performance is analyzed well to identify trends of improvement. The compilation of the portfolio is enabling the progress of students within the school to be evaluated even more systematically by a year-on-year basis.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The identification of the school's goals is a collaborative activity. These goals are continually referred to and returned to during meetings and discussions which reflect improvements to the curriculum and the quality of teaching. A particular focus has been on the drive to develop opportunities for authentic learning that also help students demonstrate their knowledge and skills on standardized assessments. The school is particularly effective in responding to the outcomes of standardized test data. For example, the school identified that fourth grade students were having particular difficulty with the extended writing component in a recent examination. In response to this, an after-school tutorial program is provided to support the current fourth grade in their preparation for the English language arts examination. Students are also being given useful help in both the reading (multiple-choice) and writing sections. Students say that they value greatly this additional support being given to them.

Data is used well to identify the specific needs of individual students, including those in the greatest need of improvement. The school continually explores ways of improving this analysis to make it more focused and specific. For example, in mathematics an early assessment is made of students’ basic skills. A matrix of students and their levels of competence highlights the specific instructional requirements for individual students. This type of data-processing also happens in other subject areas. These effective processes enable staff to share information about students’ progress. This evidence is effectively collected and collated in a portfolio of student achievement and specific needs.

The principal has very high expectations which are clearly communicated to all. This message is passed on during productive orientation sessions with students, parents and staff. The expectations of staff are clearly conveyed through a detailed school report and the regular informal meetings which take place when children are collected from school. Parents are encouraged to go to the classroom to meet their child. This unique but very positive practice enables discussion between parent and teacher to take place in a natural and spontaneous way.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The curriculum is effectively aligned with State standards. It has been successfully developed to provide a unique and strong provision in the arts. A very productive extension to the curriculum is the significant number of trips which the school organizes to extend the learning experience of students. Within this strong curriculum the school is able to generate a substantial amount of data which appropriately reflects students' progress. For example, the improvement of writing results in each grade level is tracked with a weekly writing sample in students' assessment portfolios.

Teachers are held accountable for improving instruction. They have a clear commitment to providing a range of differentiated experiences according to the learning needs of students. The administration is very supportive in terms of its scheduling decisions in order to promote this objective. For example, a common preparation time is programmed for staff from equivalent grade levels so that effective curriculum planning and sharing of good practice can take place. This was shown to particularly good effect in a kindergarten and grade 1 level meeting. The discussion centered on ways teachers could develop the theme of 'the post office' and all its supplementary and supporting services.

Budget decisions are driven by the needs of students. For example, additional staff have been hired to service the needs of the special education students. This decision enables the creation of smaller groups to promote a high level of effective intervention support. The school has made a strategic decision to work with a reduced number of administrative staff in order to put funding into its instructional programs. These resources which are either staff or financial are then used very effectively to promote curriculum opportunities for students needs as revealed by the substantive data which is held within the school.

Students enjoy being at the school and are enthusiastic and keen learners. They value the support, care and concern which are shown to them by all members of staff. It is clearly evident that there is mutual respect between students and staff. The students find their lessons challenging and are being encouraged to develop their self-assessment techniques. Attendance is a high priority for the school but actual levels are below City figures. The school is working hard on getting the message across to parents about the importance of continuity in students learning experiences but the parental response to this request is sometimes quite variable.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The principal has stringent criteria for the selection of staff. A prospective teacher is required to take a model lesson, identify specific curriculum issues and use information to infer possible learning needs of children. There are clear messages of high expectations of performance and also a willingness to commit to a school which has the child at the centre of its activities. Given the diversity of their formative assessment procedures, the teachers are continually revising and developing methods to improve their instructional practice.

Professional development is central to the school's work and is very effective. The school works imaginatively with its scheduling procedures to create opportunities for professional development. Their regular meetings are an important part of the process of sharing good practice and eliciting support from their colleagues. Frequent opportunities are provided for teachers to visit each other's classes to model and share ideas. Teachers are

encouraged to attend workshops which will develop their professional understanding and competencies.

The principal often makes visits to classrooms and gives informative feedback to staff about formal observations. She has the respect and affection of the school community. Parents are very appreciative of her openness and willingness to support them and create opportunities for them to engage in the process of educating their children. They value greatly the significant changes she has successfully brought about in the school, bringing stability and a sense of purpose to its activities. The school runs smoothly and provides a safe environment for children. The school has effectively established strong, productive working relationships with a wide range of external partners including community-based organizations. These include universities and a variety of charity institutions. These contacts provide direct support for the staff, students and their families and have a positive impact on the goals of the school.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

A particular strength of this school is its ability to be adaptive and flexible to the needs and requirements of individual children. Very effective work is carried out by the intervention teachers allied to the substantive amount of data they collect. This enables them to change the composition of groups on a regular basis. These groups are realigned in the light of the progress students make. The school provided a targeted strategy on phonic work for English as a second language students with a background in Spanish.

The extensive diagnostic assessments which are carried out on each student enable comparisons about progress to be made appropriately within classrooms. This level of data is also being effectively reinterpreted to provide a profile of grade level performance. This cycle of review of outcomes provides a strong evidence base for monitoring and informing the changes in practice which take place on a regular basis.

The school's data indicated that students were confident in personal narrative writing but that analytical and critical writing needed attention. This subsequently has become a focus for the work of students particularly in the higher grades. The completion of the detailed report card for parents is the culmination of part of this diagnostic process. The interaction with parents as a result of this reporting process provides another element of the profile of achievement which is compiled effectively for each individual child. The strengths of the school's adaptive response to immediate circumstances now need to be reflected in a greater attention to long-term goals and strategies for improvement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: John Mesler Charrette School (PS 3)	∅	✓	+
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