



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Ellen Lurie School**

**Public School 005**

**3703 10 Avenue  
New York  
NY 10034**

**Principal: Wanda Soto**

**Dates of review: February 8 - 10, 2007**

**Reviewer: Ted Solow**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Public School 5 is located in the Inwood Heights section of upper Manhattan. It serves a population of 934 students in grades kindergarten through 5, of which 93.5% are Hispanic, 5.9% Black, 3% White, and 3% are Asian and others. English language learners comprise 52% of the student population. Special education students, who are served in self-contained and collaborative team teaching classes, account for 5% of the students at the school. All grades are heterogeneously grouped. The latest attendance rate was 94.94% which is higher than similar and City schools. The school receives Title 1 funding.

The Children's Aid Society, a community based organization, is a partner at the school. This non-profit organization supports the students and their families by operating a medical and dental clinic, as well as some collaborative after-school programs with the school that include academic support and recreational activities. The school and society together offers a wide variety of parent activities that are held during the week as well as on Saturdays.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal promotes collaborative relationships and accountability for everyone.
- The principal focuses sharply on teaching and learning within a school culture of high expectations for all students.
- The administrative team is highly visible and supportive.
- Grade teams work well collaboratively to provide optimal teaching and learning conditions for the students.
- The school has well-defined intervention policies and practices in place for struggling students.
- Procedures, policies and rules contribute to a very positive school tone that is conducive to learning.
- The warm and caring climate fostered by the staff is one reason students want to go to this school.
- The staff uses assessment data to address learning practices.
- The school is well maintained with hallways and classrooms exhibiting many examples of student work reflecting current classroom activities.

### What the school needs to improve

- Train staff to analyze and improve the quality of student writing ability.
- Align the science and social studies curriculum for each grade to address student needs.
- Refine the analysis of data for all English language learners to monitor progress from beginning to intermediate, advanced and proficient levels.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well-developed school.**

During her seven year tenure the principal has been successful in establishing a collaborative and caring approach to learning. Everyone is held accountable in this school that focuses its efforts on teaching and learning within a culture of high expectations for all. The school has collected, assembled, analyzed and disseminated a wide range of formal and informal data from the City, State and school sources. There is a dedicated team of teachers, many of whom have been at the school since it opened 14 years ago.

There is an effective professional development program in place to address the needs of the staff in all grades. Differentiated instruction, scaffolding learning for English language learners and technology integration in the content areas are examples from the extensive professional development menu.

For the past three years the school has sustained steady improvement in English language arts and mathematics outcomes. The hallways and classrooms are decorated with many examples of student work reflecting current activities in reading, writing, mathematics and other curricula areas.

### 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 compiles many sources of data from State, City, school-wide and in-class assessments for dissemination and analysis by teachers, coaches, related service providers and administrators. The professional development program supports teachers in the use and understanding of data in order to drive and differentiate instruction. Grade teams meet weekly to review the latest data, as it pertains to every student in a grade, to plan appropriate lessons and activities to address student needs. The administrative team monitors data for every student, class, grade and cohort to assess progress.

Data is gathered for all groups of students in the school. There is no specific targeting of ethnic groups since there are mainly two groups in the school. Special education students are monitored for individual progress, as well as for the number of students who are moved into least restrictive environments, re-evaluated and decertified. English language arts and mathematics achievement is closely monitored for this group of students. English language learners are assessed during the school year for their progress in moving from the beginner level towards intermediate, advanced and proficient levels of English language acquisition. However, the principal recognizes the need to refine how the school analyzes data for this subgroup not only for English as a second language progress but also for performance on the State English language arts and mathematics examinations.

Every classroom has a specific method to store its data. Assessment data generated in every class includes running records, conference notes, Princeton Review interim data, unit tests and portfolios. All are used to develop appropriate lessons and teaching strategies.

The school monitors its past performance and compares it with current trends. Data analysis includes the measurement of how each student, grade and cohort has progressed from year to year. In English language arts and mathematics outcomes the school outperforms similar schools. One measure of the school's success is that at the end of grades three and four, the highest performing students choose to enter a special gifted and talented program at another school.

**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 school's code, 'respect, responsibility and reflection leads to rewards', is fostered within a collaborative culture where the common goal is high expectations for all students. Teachers discuss student goals during conferencing sessions, at parent meetings, with mathematics and literacy coaches, consultants and related service providers during weekly grade team meetings. The staff is adept at using data to plan and set goals designed to meet students' long- and short-term needs. Students know what is required and can articulate their personal expectations. Individual teachers meet regularly with each student to discuss their progress and plans to achieve the next higher goal. Teachers provide continual feedback to their students concerning written work, projects, and meeting specific benchmarks of progress in all curriculum areas.

For students not meeting progress goals, reviews are held in weekly grade team meetings for suggestions and strategies that can be used to address specific needs. Students who are still at-risk are referred to the pupil personnel committee by the classroom teacher for further review. Case studies are presented to the committee and appropriate intervention services are instituted and monitored for progress every two weeks. During the day, the school offers intervention that includes push in and pull out programs and small group instruction provided by specialists to address student needs. Some interventions are provided after-school to include tutoring, homework help, and Saturday sessions.

The principal has made a concerted effort to inform parents about the school goals. She conducts a parent orientation in September when the goals are discussed with members of the school community. Workshops for parents about ways to help their child succeed in school and how to help children with reading and mathematics assignments are conducted during the school year. Parents are regularly contacted by phone, through progress reports, report cards, open school conferences and informal conversations at drop off and dismissal times. There is an active, involved parent coordinator who arranges many activities, workshops and English as a second language classes. The parent teacher association holds monthly meetings around topics of interest to parents.

The school uses the Comprehensive Education Plan, professional development plans, the principal's goals and objectives, safety and attendance plans as the basis for planning

instructional activities and academic enrichment services. Data and student outcomes are evaluated for each student, class and grade using the plans as benchmarks.

**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 literacy and mathematics curriculum are mandated by the City. These core subjects are taught along with units of study in science, social studies, technology and the arts. There is a curriculum calendar that outlines day to day instructional activities for grades kindergarten through five. Teachers indicated that they found this very helpful for their planning activities. Science studies have been upgraded with the addition of a new teacher, more equipment and new textbooks to foster a hands-on approach to science learning across the grades. There is much evidence of content area enrichment activities in the classrooms; for example, the extensive classroom libraries and activity centers are evident. The richly decorated rooms have many fine examples of current student work with appropriate feedback from the teachers. Literacy choices are aligned to the content areas. However, the principal has begun to address the alignment of the science and social studies curriculum in each grade to address the needs of the students. Data information is the impetus for these changes. School leaders recognize there is a need to improve student writing and have begun to address this need with appropriate staff development activities.

Data generated in the school indicates that teacher performance and student learning have improved. Differentiation of instruction is visible in the classrooms. Teachers monitor student work and reinforce newly learned concepts and skills with struggling students when they work in small groups. This practice is most evident in the collaborative team teaching class. Lessons are designed to meet the levels of individual students and actively engage them in their learning. In the lower grades, reduced class size allows the staff to better know their students. By the time the students reach the upper grades both students and their families are well known to teachers, related service providers and the administrative team.

The principal uses her budget wisely to ensure all staffing, scheduling, textbooks, library books and technology equipment needs are met. Attendance is a high priority at the school and has increased steadily during the past three years. It is now higher than similar schools across the City. Absence triggers an immediate response.

**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**

Staff members are selected on the basis of their becoming part of a team dedicated to educating a population of willing learners. Future teachers are considered based on their content knowledge, commitment to use data to drive instruction, meeting with selected staff members and teaching a demonstration lesson. The principal makes the final decision on all staffing decisions.

The professional development plan delineates all activities for the academic year. It is broken down into the areas of literacy, bilingual education, technology and mathematics. Sessions are also offered in using data in the classroom and differentiating instruction. Revisions are made as a need is recognized. Professional development activities are conducted at grade meetings, faculty conferences, demonstrations and walkthroughs. Staff members are involved with the planning and delivery of staff development activities. Teachers indicated the desire for a formal schedule of inter-visitations in order to observe best practices. The administrative team frequently observes teachers, both formally and informally. Feedback is provided through post-observation conferences and a written report. Informal visits are recorded on a feedback log posted on the door of every classroom and through brief verbal conversations. Teachers plan collaboratively in grade teams to prepare lesson plans and assess student learning. The coaches meet with each grade team to review current data, student progress and grouping in the classroom.

Students, teachers and parents stated that the principal is well respected for her accessibility, compassion, educational knowledge and administrative ability. There are well established procedures, policies, and school rules that contribute to an orderly tone throughout the building. Parents cited that an emergency evacuation of the school was calm, organized and efficiently handled.

The school is a Community Full Service School which is designed to service the whole child. Through collaboration with the Children's Aid Society, a non-profit organization, after school programs are provided in academic enrichment and recreational activities. Programs are offered during school holidays, on Saturday's and during a summer camp. Medical, dental, and social and emotional services are available for students, their siblings and family members.

**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 Comprehensive Education Plan is a living document that is reviewed regularly by the principal and the school leadership team. Practices and policies, identified in the plan, for evaluating student progress are revisited during the school year for appropriate adjustments. Individual, class, grade, and cohort progress is addressed at grade team meetings, faculty meetings, with coaches and consultants, other service providers and the school leadership team. The progress of at-risk students, who have been identified by the pupil personnel team, is reviewed every two weeks. The principal recognizes the need to refine the analysis of the progress of English language learners within the school.

The administrative team, school leadership team, and teachers regularly review progress towards meeting annual goals. The staff actively monitors student progress and feed information back to designated school personnel. Parents are kept informed through report cards, phone conversations, and progress reports.

Data generated by State, City, other reporting agencies and the school is effectively used to revise and modify school wide goals.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Ellen Lurie School (PS 5)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<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>			<b>X</b>
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>		<b>X</b>	
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>			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>

\* 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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<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