



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Samuel Stern School

Public School 007

**160 East 120 Street
New York
NY 10035**

Principal: Racquel Jones

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Reviewer: Mike Doran

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 007 is a pre-kindergarten to eighth grade community school located in a multicultural neighborhood on the upper east side of Manhattan. The school extended its provision to seventh grade in 2005-6, and to eighth grade in the current school year. The principal took up post at the beginning of the current school year.

Its current population of 477 students reflects the cultural diversity of the neighborhood: 61% Hispanic and 37% Black students, with the remaining 2% coming from White, Asian and other backgrounds. The proportion of English language learners and special needs students is high compared with other City schools. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding, with 97% of the students eligible. This is high compared with similar and City schools. Attendance is in line with City and similar schools.

The school has a strong commitment to enabling students to achieve both academically and in terms of personal development. The number of students meeting the standards in tested grades are in line with, or above, the averages for similar schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides good leadership because of her clarity of direction and her determination to create a school with a distinctive identity.
- The principal is supported by committed, talented and professional teams of administrators and teachers.
- The parents hold the school and its staff in high regard.
- The school provides a calm, orderly, and safe environment to which students respond with behavior and attitudes to learning that are good.
- Teachers are very supportive of one-another, and they are provided with a well planned program of professional development aligned to the needs of the school.
- The schools' academic intervention team, working closely with the pupil personnel team, provides well planned and progressive support for students causing concern.
- The English language arts, mathematics, and 'Reading First' coaches provide effective professional support to grade and subject teaching teams.
- Literacy programs are particularly strong in kindergarten and lower grades, underpinned by a wide range of assessment tools and teaching and learning strategies.
- The 'work-shop' model for teaching has been established across the school and provides the basis for differentiated lesson planning informed by assessment data.
- Attendance is maintained by effective incentivized and pro-active monitoring systems.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop systematic and consistent formative assessment and recording across all grades and curriculum areas, aligned to standardized tests.
- Take more account of the starting points of students on entry to each grade and patterns of under-achievement when setting goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan.
- Establish a system for recording the progress and support history of individual students from the point of entry, to better inform the instructional support and personal development of the students.
- Further develop the use of computer technology as a tool for teaching, and to support the management and use of student data.
- Extend and enrich curriculum and instructional provision for the most able and high-achieving students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school

Since her recent appointment, the principal has successfully led the school through a continuing period of transition in extending provision to eighth grade, and has established high expectations of staff and students. The distinctive focus on the arts, integrated with the wider curriculum, and drawing on professional expertise within and outside the school, is giving the students curriculum breadth and further opportunities to achieve and raise self-esteem.

The school's strong focus on reading and writing, and the introduction of the workshop model of instructional planning, underpins the school's good levels of achievement in standardized tests, and points the way forward for the further development of teaching in other areas of the curriculum and across all grades.

The school's increasing use of assessment data has resulted in the improving performance of students. The school's greatest strength lies in the detailed picture it builds up of each of its students, enabling it to promote high expectations for achievement, without losing sight of the need for individual personal development and support.

Areas for improvement identified in this report are mainly concerned with ensuring consistency in the gathering and effective use of data across the school, and with further extending the systematic collection, recording and analysis of data to inform planning and the monitoring of progress at the classroom and whole-school level. The school is well placed to carry-out such further improvements.

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 gathers a wide range of data relating to the performance and progress of individual students. The data collected is particularly comprehensive with respect to English language arts and associated intervention support strategies. In the lower grades the 'Reading First' program is well supported by a coach and a wide range of assessment tools. They provide detailed diagnostic monitoring and support to students in reading and the wider English language arts curriculum. However, data collection in mathematics is less systematic, and there is variation between teachers and grades in how assessments are carried out and records kept. A similar picture occurs for the other curriculum areas, and for all subjects in the upper grades of the school.

The data is scrutinized by the school's instructional cabinet, and by grade and subject teams working in collaboration, to monitor the progress of each student, to indicate next steps in learning and, where necessary, referral to the academic intervention team for more detailed monitoring and support. Item analysis is also used to identify and rectify particular weaknesses in the instructional programs and their delivery. The emphasis is

strongly on literacy and on recent and current student performance, particularly for those near level boundaries and those causing concern. There is not, however, a more in-depth and longitudinal perspective of students' progress from their individual starting points on entry. Data management is largely paper based and teachers would welcome the use of technology to help their management and analysis of assessment data.

The recent and current progress of students in each subject area of the curriculum, class by class, grade by grade is scrutinized to inform whole-school planning. However, the school does not extend data collection to longitudinal comparative analysis and the analysis of sub-group performance.

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 analysis of data to inform lesson planning, learning goals and next steps is strong in reading and writing, particularly in the lower grades. However, the data from standardized tests and data from teachers' own assessments in the classroom, are not suitably rigorous or consistently integrated into planning or setting challenging goals for the students across all areas of the curriculum and all grades. The school also does not extend its use of data to inform planning and the setting and monitoring of goals at the whole-school level.

The school has high expectations of its students. The current progress of students is monitored closely, and where there is a concern, parents are involved. Students are referred to progressive levels of support and/or intervention programs through the academic intervention and the pupil personnel teams. Provision for English language learners and special needs students is good and informed by close monitoring of their current progress. However, the case study carried out during the review clearly illustrated that such support would be further strengthened by maintaining longitudinal records of the progress of individual students, both in terms of their academic and personal development, and the support they have received.

The school has well-established organizational structures that encourage collaborative working at grade level in developing the curriculum, instructional programs and assessment. The high level of trust that exists between staff means that teachers are not afraid to share reflection on their practice and make improvements.

The school communicates clearly with parents and involves them from the start in their children's learning. A rigorous system of progress reports, record cards and teacher-parent conferencing ensures that students and their parents are kept well informed of progress and the next steps in learning to maintain progress. The school provides curriculum events for parents to encourage them to support their child's learning at home. Parents appreciate the ready access they have to staff and the timeliness with which teachers let them know of any concerns.

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.

All teachers are involved in curriculum development as they review and evaluate the impact of their teaching. In this way the school has been successful in adapting the mandated curriculum and developing the instructional programs to meet the needs of its students.

The ‘workshop’ model of lesson planning has been introduced across the school, but there is inconsistency between teachers and subject areas in taking full advantage of its potential to provide a vehicle for differentiated instruction. Mini-lessons and small group work are furthest developed in the lower grades, particularly within English language arts. Assessment and support for students in other subjects and in the upper grades are as yet undeveloped. Students feel safe to try out ideas and solutions so that they are able to respond to challenges without fear of ‘being wrong’. Information technology is recognized as a powerful learning tool in the classroom and continues to be developed. Some teachers require sustained professional development support in order to implement agreed approaches more fully and consistently.

Students are well behaved, and have a generally responsible attitude towards their learning. Attendance is in line with that of City and similar schools. Student attendance is monitored closely and pro-actively pursued with appropriate incentives. Staff know their students well, and students are very appreciative of their openness and approachability. Students confirm that the principal’s open-door policy works in practice.

Knowledge and data about student performance drives key decisions about the budget and resources, including staffing. Appropriate levels of funding are focused on the professional development of staff, and on the improvement strategies and goals identified in the school’s Comprehensive Education Plan. In particular, the principal intends to extend mathematics coach provision to the lower grades, increase the professional development focus on the use of data to inform differentiated lesson planning, on guidance support for transition to high school, and on provision for the most able and high achieving students.

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 with some well-developed features.

Having taken up post recently, the principal has inherited her staff and is still in the process of assessing the expertise of her team and where it needs to be strengthened in relation to the needs of an expanded school. She has established a system for staff selection using a range of criteria and procedures such as modelling a lesson, and involving her administrators and other lead staff in a rigorous interview process.

Professional development is aligned to the needs of the school. It is well planned and managed by the instructional cabinet in consultation with staff, and informed by the school’s current performance. Discussion and debate in grade and subject teams is an important part of professional development, and staff are able to reflect on and share their

teaching practice. Staff expertise, and in particular that of the coaches, is well deployed to support teaching teams, through collaborative planning and joint teaching.

The school is a calm and orderly place, and is welcoming to students, parents and visitors. The principal, assistant principal and other lead staff are well respected, and provide a model not only of their high expectations but also of their care and commitment to students and their families. The principal has the capacity and determination to drive through school improvement plans, and to make any organisational changes to the school that are needed to achieve this.

The principal and assistant principal regularly and systematically observe instructional practice and provide feedback to teachers. This in turn informs planning for professional development overseen by the instructional cabinet. The coaches follow through with well-planned professional support.

The school is also very concerned to provide opportunities for the development of broader skills and interests, and it offers enrichment and extension activities to interest and engage students. In this respect, an integrated arts program together with other enrichment activities, under-pinned by partnerships with external professionals and organizations, are central to the work of the school and provide a distinctive enhancement to the academic program. In particular, the school has a full-time instrumental teacher who, together with graduate students from the Juilliard School of Music, provides music instruction to grades four to eight.

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 school consults through a range of constituencies inside and outside the school in its decision-making. Teachers have a consultative committee, students have a students' council and parents have an active parent-teacher association. These key groups are well informed by the leadership of the school and feel they have a voice.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is used as a working document, reviewed regularly throughout the year and overseen by the school leadership team. In addition, elements of the plan are reviewed in the cabinet meetings and in the principal's regular discussions with grade and subject teams, and the intervention teams. Where aspects of the action plan are slipping or not having the expected impact, steps are taken to quickly rethink and revise the plan of action. However, on a longer time frame, the school leadership team does not play a strong enough role in reviewing the progress of the school, using performance data to inform their consideration of options for school improvement.

The school does not yet make full use of student performance data to inform the annual Comprehensive Education Plan, and other linked plans, about the comparative performance of specific student groups, to take account of the starting points of students, and to monitor and adapt the school's plans and goals.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Samuel Stern School (PS/MS 007)	∅	✓	+
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		