



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Elias Howe School

Public School 51

520 West 45 Street

New York

New York 10036

Principal: Nancy Sing-Bock

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Reviewer: Georgie Beasley

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well
What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation
How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Elias Howe School has 320 students enrolled from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school's population comprises 55.3% Hispanic, 17% Black, 14.9% Asian, 11.2% White and 1.2% American Indian students. The proportion of English language learners is 13.8% which is broadly the same as in most similar and City schools; although due to strengths in the school's instruction there are many students who speak a language in addition to English. The school has a growing number of immigrants who have recently arrived in the country. Around 10% of the school's population are special education students, all taught in mainstream classes. This is a slightly smaller proportion than typically found in similar schools. The school receives Title 1 funding due to the higher than average proportion of students who are eligible. Attendance is around 94%, which is above that of similar and city schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has a friendly, family atmosphere, values everyone's contribution and welcomes them as learners.
- The principal and assistant principal work very effectively as a team to successfully communicate the school's vision and values and ensure everyone is striving for the same goals.
- The whole staff works together extremely well to make sure they all play a crucial part in students' academic and personal development.
- Teams have clearly developed responsibilities and this enables the school to use the skills other people bring to the school.
- Teachers are very skillful and use data well to plan instruction that meets the full range of learners in classes.
- Parents are valued for their contribution and are proud to be involved in the school's success.
- The students feel their voice is heard and so listen respectfully and politely to others in return.
- Lessons are interesting, so students concentrate well and strive to do their best.
- The curriculum is planned and organized in a way that ensures students are fully engaged.
- Peer mediators are very effective.

What the school needs to improve

- Analyze data by gender in English, mathematics and science to identify if there is a trend and tackle the reasons for any differences noted.
- Extend systems for monitoring progress in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies to all grades.
- Align school goals to students' end of year academic achievements, identified in the analysis of data from teachers' assessments and test scores.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

Everyone who steps inside the school is welcomed and valued as a learner. This is reflected in the strong focus on student learning, parent workshops and staff study groups, all of which have made positive impact on students' achievements. As a result, the school's results are going up year after year. The principal and assistant principal form a formidable team and motivate and empower staff, parents and students to do the very good job that they all do.

Students respond positively to the way that they are treated by interacting with each other and adults in the same respectful and polite way. If they do ask for help, students know they will get it in a positive way because 'teachers tell us it is because they have not taught us clearly enough, rather than because we haven't learnt it'. Most recognize that learning is fun, which it is and so lessons engage their interest and motivate them to learn and do well. Trained peer mediators take their responsibility seriously and talk impressively about the work they do in helping other students to work together to sort out any minor disagreements. They recognize the importance of the job and take their responsibilities seriously.

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 collects an extensive range and amount of assessment data that gives detailed information about individual student's performance in English, mathematics, science and social studies. The school analyzes and tracks performance and progress closely. The focus has mainly been on students in older grades in order to align the school's data with results in State and City tests. Teachers constantly update the information collected so they have an objective and current view of what every student knows and is able to do in their classes. Teachers share the information with each other and so they compare how students are doing from class to class and grade to grade. The school keeps a particularly close watch on special education students, English language learners, those who are only at the school for short periods of time and students who are at risk of slipping back or capable of moving up a level.

The school analyzes its data extremely carefully to build up a clear picture of each individual student's needs. The data enables the school to compare how well students' performance in this school compares with those in similar and other City schools. It looks carefully at how much improvement there has been year on year for the different groups in the school and further refines the analysis of ethnic groups by language spoken. As a result, most students who speak English as a second language are proficient in English and do well in tests. The school analyzes its data by gender and so recognizes that there are differences in some year groups in English. It concludes these are due to student

differences and so has not looked closely enough to see if there is an emerging trend or underlying cause linked to the curriculum and instruction.

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.

Teams work effectively to set long-term and interim goals for the school and individual student’s performance. These are translated to class, grade and subject goals so that different teams can review and adjust them as necessary to fully support students’ progress. Some goals are too general and focus on the action the school plans to take rather than what its aims to achieve. The school goals that do have an objective measure are based on an incremental increase each year and so are not aligned closely enough to the goals students are expected to reach by the end of the year.

The groupings identified by the school for particular attention change according to the data, including newly arrived immigrants who are learning to speak English, students in transition because they live in temporary accommodation, and students who are struggling or capable of moving up a level. As a result, suitable programs are implemented immediately to support and accelerate progress in equal measure. The information is used particularly well to help teachers plan next steps in learning. Everyone is committed to ensuring all students do as well as they can and are constantly striving to help them improve even more. Progress is checked regularly and questions are asked if any student is identified at risk of slipping back or not reaching their goals. As a result, test scores have shown an annual increase for several years.

The school sets high expectations for its students, both personally and academically. Parents are given good formal and informal opportunities to discuss goals and give information about their children’s progress. They value being able to pop in at any time to talk through concerns and receive feedback about how well their children are doing. Workshops are held that deal with curriculum issues relating to each grade. This makes information and sharing of ideas relevant and supports parents in helping their children with learning at home.

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.

Teachers know their students very well and so take into account not only the class’ academic goals but also the different interests and ways that students learn when planning instruction. A range of teaching methods ensure lessons are varied. Teachers acknowledge that if learning is to occur they have to make sure their teaching is good. This attitude has built strong relationships in class which ensures that all students are confident to ask for help at any time. The curriculum is planned effectively to engage and interest students and so help them to learn. Relevant links between subjects, science taught through practical activities and investigational mathematics games help make learning fun so students are totally engaged in lessons. They like learning and make

positive contributions in lessons, listen actively and respectfully and concentrate for long periods on tasks. Rubrics leveled against the standards and graphic organizers displayed around classrooms give clear guidance to students on what is expected. Students are fully involved in assessing their own work and know their goals and what they need to do to reach them.

Data is used well to identify which students would benefit from small group intervention strategies including 'push in and pull out' and reading recovery. Scheduling decisions support this work by employing teachers who support reading in the morning and teach specialist subjects in the afternoon. Extended day activities have been rescheduled so that students can benefit from the additional tutoring and attend enrichment after school activities during the week. Budgeting decisions are based on identified needs and development and so make sure that staffing and resources are made available to support the curriculum and instruction.

Expectations for good attendance are reinforced constantly through a positive and well received reward program. Each month's attendance stars are recognized and their names displayed outside the classrooms. Students and parents look forward to the magic pencils awarded for perfect attendance and punctuality.

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 are selected according to their skills to use data effectively to plan their instruction, along with their commitment to the school's values and vision. Teachers talk to each other openly about how they can improve instruction and develop and revise plans accordingly. Teachers' expertise is built effectively through a well organized and planned program of professional development which responds effectively to data analysis and individual teacher's needs. Study groups are a regular feature of staff development and have been successful in raising teachers' expertise and skills in writing and the teaching of English language learners. The information packs, produced as a result of the meetings and training, have been adopted by other schools. Teachers work alongside specialists in science so that they can extend their own skills for teaching this subject. Discussions at grade meetings, visits to each others' classes and attendance at workshops all help to develop and extend individual teacher's expertise.

The principal, assistant principal and coaches visit classes regularly to observe and improve instruction. For example, the school decided to improve the way that teachers conference with their students. As a result of ongoing discussions and evaluations, conferencing notes are more detailed and identify next steps against clear performance indicators aligned to the state and City standards. A well-structured range of team meetings enable all staff to discuss every student's needs at some point each month and identify whether further support or extension programs are required.

The principal is respected by staff, students and parents. She has a very clear knowledge of the school's successes and, working in partnership with her assistant principal, has set up systems that enable the school to run smoothly and keep a strong focus on student achievement and success. The school works closely with parents, community organizations and support services to help it achieve its goals. Workshops for parents focus on family values. For example, the CookShop program enables students and

parents to learn about and cook a range of healthy food options. As a result, the school is producing a recipe book to share everyone's ideas. Students thrive on the opportunities to take part in Rosie's Broadway Kids program to learn about theater studies and their participation builds their self confidence and makes them thirsty to learn.

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.

Regular team meetings ensure every aspect of the school's work is constantly evaluated and reviewed. Open and honest evaluations on how effectively intervention programs and instruction are helping individual students to make good progress lead to adjustments in programs and goals. Teams have clear roles and responsibilities and this structure ensures that every aspect of the school's work is monitored at some stage throughout the year. The effectiveness of interventions for struggling students is monitored closely by the academic intervention team, and is set within a comprehensive system for monitoring the progress and performance of all students. Close evaluation of assessment data leads to immediate changes in programs and interventions should the school note that progress is not as good as expected. At the end of each year, a more detailed review takes place and the information is used to plan the following year's goals. The school's goals identify an expected increase on the previous year's performance. While goals are aspirational, they are not aligned closely to the levels that students in each grade and class are expected to reach at the end of each year. It is therefore difficult for the school to measure and decide whether goals are set too high or whether they could be set even higher. Students feel they are given opportunity to express their opinions about what is and is not going well in school and that their opinions are valued. Parents play a full part in helping the school evaluate its programs and the information they give helps the school revise plans if required.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Elias Howe School (PS51)	∅	✓	+
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