



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**William McKinley School**

**Public School 63**

**121 East 3rd Street  
New York  
NY 10009**

**Principal: Hibren Salazar**

**Dates of review: January 18 – 19, 2007**

**Reviewer: John Collings**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The William McKinley School is an elementary school of approximately 220 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. Until 2006, the school had students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. The student population comprises 65% Hispanic, 19% black, 10% Asian and 6% White students. There are 78% general education students, 21% special-education students and less than 1% English language learners. The majority of special education students are served within general education classes. There are a small number of ungraded students. School attendance has recently improved to 92.4%, above the City average. The school enrolment is falling because of significant demographic changes within the area. The current principal is well established and the school is applying for magnet status for science.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school is inclusive, has a nurturing environment for students and has a positive climate for learning.
- The school uses currently available data effectively.
- Ongoing assessment is used well by classroom teachers to refine work to meet the needs of their students.
- Students in the greatest need are given good attention and supported well within classrooms.
- Teachers differentiate instruction for the vast majority of their students.
- Because class sizes are kept low, teachers know their students very well and are able to support them appropriately.
- Teachers are given considerable autonomy in scheduling classroom and preparation time, enabling them to prepare work that meets the range of student need.
- Staff support each other well through model lessons and inter-visitations to each other's classrooms.
- The school has responded promptly to address any weaknesses in performance in English, mathematics and science.
- Student attendance is improving, as a result of efforts by the school

### What the school needs to improve

- Refine the use of data to be better informed about the progress of different groups of students, including ethnic groups.
- Involve teachers more in analyzing data for their classes, thus allowing them to set realistic goals for their students' progress.
- Ensure that higher-attaining students are appropriately challenged to ensure they make the best possible progress.
- Review procedures for passing ongoing student records from one year to the next.
- Increase the responsibility that staff take for creating the goals for the Comprehensive Education Plan.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

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

The school uses data appropriately to modify instructional programs to meet identified student needs. Because of the small class sizes all students and particularly students in the greatest need are well supported. Teachers use ongoing assessment to ensure work is differentiated appropriately for the vast majority of students. However, the school recognizes that it needs to pay more attention to challenging higher-achieving students. Teachers plan jointly within grade levels to good effect. However, teachers' informal assessments are not documented well enough to enable them to be used effectively by the next grade teacher. Overall, the goals the school sets itself are clear and have measurable outcomes, but the input and responsibilities taken by staff other than the principal and leadership team are limited.

### 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.**

Formal and informal assessment data is used in a variety of ways to monitor students' progress and guide instruction. Information from teacher-led assessments such as running records and mathematics checklists is used to identify strengths and weaknesses, and group students for instruction. In the higher grades, the school uses State data and ongoing assessment from curricular programs, aligned with State standards, appropriately to monitor the progress students make. This data is then used effectively to change the emphasis of teaching to redress the area where the least progress is being made.

Data helps to identify whether the proportion of students meeting each level is improving as they move from one grade to the next. It shows that the increased emphasis on supporting lower-attaining students has resulted in more students achieving above level 1. In the lower grades, data from ongoing assessment in the English language arts and mathematics programs is used effectively to monitor students and when necessary support those who are not making the expected progress. For example, they are supported by push-in support in the classroom, as well as after-school programs. However, data on individual students is not consistently passed from one teacher to the next, so that time is lost before work can be accurately matched to their needs.

The school does not systematically identify any differences in progress or achievement of, for example, ethnic groups or English language learners, preferring to focus on each student as an individual. The school's view is that because class sizes are small and students are known very well by the class teachers, any support required is given promptly, but this means that patterns of under-achievement are not necessarily identified and acted upon.

The school uses data from the State to compare its success with similar schools, and year-

on-year comparison shows that student performance is improving, particularly in the reduction in the number of level 1 students. The principal and other administrators compare the progress of, for example, students in different classrooms, grade levels or academic areas. However, although teachers analyze performance data for their own classes, they are less adept at the broader interpretation of data, which lies mainly with the cabinet.

**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 Comprehensive Education Plan is largely compiled by the principal, based on data from assessments, teacher and parent surveys, and other information. For example, data shows that the recent emphasis on ensuring student performance has resulted in fewer students gaining a level 1 in State tests and an increasing number attaining level 2 and above. The school has also used data well to identify uneven progress in mathematics. Consequently, it has set new goals to ensure better conceptual development in mathematics from grade to grade and to improve the challenge and raise achievement for higher-attaining students. However, the school is aware that it could use data more rigorously to monitor progress more frequently and to identify the progress of various groups more accurately. Staff are given the opportunity to contribute to the identification of whole-school goals but are currently not as involved as they could be.

Teachers use their assessments to identify instructional goals, based on State standards and mathematical and literacy milestones and concepts. These goals are general or for groups of students rather than individual goals to address students’ needs in detail. The school recognizes that this would help teachers and students to have a more acute focus on raising achievement for every student. The school gives good attention to improving the performance and progress of students in the greatest need. This is exemplified in the continued reduction in the number of students attaining a low grade in State tests, partly due to the push-in support they receive.

There are high expectations in the school. There is effective communication between home and school and regular meetings with parents inform them of their children’s progress. Rubrics are shared with students and they are encouraged to assess their own work by some teachers. Some teachers are beginning to teach students to see their own scores from Princeton review on line to further involve them in their own learning, but this is not yet established practice. There is a positive climate for learning in the school because all members of the school community are focused on supporting students to perform as well as they can and to make the best possible progress.

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

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The school implements the mandated curriculum effectively. It uses the data generated from interim tests within these programs to modify the curriculum to rectify any areas of

weakness and to ensure the vast majority of students are challenged appropriately, for example in mathematics. This analysis has been effective where, for example, the school identified areas of weakness in students' conceptual development of mathematics and the curriculum was then modified to address this.

Lessons are differentiated based on prior attainment to meet student need. This differentiation is more commonly based on additional support, which within the small classes is effective. However, the school is aware that lessons are not often differentiated with a range of expectations for different groups of students with differing performance levels. Some higher-achieving students express a wish for more challenging work.

The school has made the budgetary decision to use its Title 1 money to have small classes. This has been very effective in ensuring all students are well known to their class teachers and that their individual needs are met. The school is also proactive in identifying resources such as textbooks to support, for example, higher-attaining students in mathematics. It has also focused resources on science. This was a result of data analysis that showed science scores had fallen. However, the school is aware that through more rigorous use of data it could identify need more accurately and consequently improve resources to meet those needs.

Class teachers have significant autonomy within their grades to schedule the curriculum to meet students' needs. The scheduling also extends to the use of the period at the end of the day, and an extended-day program. This results in students being fully engaged in their work, wanting to learn and enjoying coming to school because they find lessons interesting, generally challenging and engaging. They trust the staff, and are confident to ask for help if needed. Absences are rigorously addressed, and as a result, student attendance has significantly increased within the last year to above the City average.

**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.**

Staff are selected through application, interview and by giving a demonstration lesson. Candidates are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the use of data, not only as a measure of their own performance but also that of their students. It is a goal within the Comprehensive Education Plan to train teachers to use the available data more effectively to compare how well students improve while they are in their classes.

Professional development is well focused on student needs identified by the data. This results in appropriate professional development to support teachers in their classes, for example, the programs to improve science, mathematics, and supporting teachers to interpret data more effectively. There is also good support from the Teachers' College Reading and Writing Project to improve performance in this area. Teachers work collaboratively at each grade level, sharing their expertise in planning the curriculum and individual lessons. Each grade is given significant autonomy to adapt their curriculum, within guidelines, and devise strategies best suited to the needs of their students. The school is aware that not all teachers are using the data rigorously enough to inform their planning, and is consequently arranging professional development to support them to do so.

In addition to formal observations, the principal walks through classes frequently. In

addition to these formal and informal observations, external coaches support teachers in developing their pedagogic skills. Teachers not meeting the school's expectations are supported appropriately. The school recognizes that there is a need for greater inter-visitations across subjects, classes and schools to increase teachers' range of skills in order to develop their abilities to assume a greater range of responsibilities across the school.

The principal is respected, and has shared expectations about the use of data with the staff. The school is calm and orderly. Staff work appropriately with youth development and support services to support students' social and academic progress, for example, the after-school program and the use of Learning Leaders to train parent volunteers to work in classrooms to assist teachers, and tutor students.

**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 identifies the goals the school has for the following year, and has clear criteria against which the progress towards these goals is measured. The plan is comprehensive, well-focused and with clear objectives but performance data is currently used only annually to assess progress against goals, rather than having clear interim milestones to facilitate regular review. The school's agenda for change currently relies too little on delegated responsibilities to other members of staff.

The school use data to review curriculum, initiatives and interventions. Staff compare student progress effectively within and across classrooms using data that is derived from the curriculum programs used. The school reviews programs for their effectiveness and has, in the past, stopped using programs when they have proven to be ineffective. The school is aware, however, that it does not assess whether it is meeting goals frequently enough. It recognizes that more frequent reviews would help to ensure whether programs and intervention are meeting the school's goals effectively and help the school to become more proactive in adjusting instruction to the needs of its students.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: William McKinley School (PS63 )</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.</b>	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students*</li> </ul>	X		
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		X	

\* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

<b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		X	
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.		X	
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>		X	
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.		X	
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.		X	
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>		X	
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	