



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Jacques Cartier School

Public School 102

**315 East 113 Street
New York
NY 10029**

Principal: Sandra Gittens

Dates of review: January 25 - 26, 2007

Reviewer: Jean Mackie

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The school is located in the centre of East Harlem. There are 329 students enrolled, from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The vast majority of students (70%) are Hispanic. A further 20% are Black and the remaining 10% comprise students from a range of nationalities. The school has a higher proportion of students who have recently entered the country than both similar and City schools. Most of these students come from Mexico. The attendance rate has been improving recently but, at 90.3% in 2005, it was below the figure for both similar and City schools. The school has been in receipt of Title 1 funding for the last three years. It has shared its building with a charter school for the last two years. Following a City-wide reorganization last year, the school no longer has a grade 6. Numbers in the pre-kindergarten are increasing and the school has moved this year to creating more collaborative team teaching classes. There are now two bilingual classes compared to the one last year.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal, along with her cabinet, provides clear and purposeful leadership.
- The school uses data well to monitor trends in performance and track students' progress, particularly in reading.
- There are good examples of instructional practice, with teachers encouraging accountable talk in pairs and groups.
- There is a strong collaborative team of staff who are eager to share ideas and good practice.
- The school provides a caring environment, with all adults fully committed to the personal and academic development of the students.
- Students enjoy being in school and they show a strong desire to learn and do well.
- The bright surroundings, well-stocked library and displays of work provide a stimulating environment and celebrate students' achievements.
- Firm foundations for pupils' academic and personal development are provided in the early childhood classes.
- The after school program is well managed and provides valuable additional support for those attending.
- There is a strong focus on professional development which is valued by the staff.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue the focus on developing benchmarking data in mathematics to mirror those in reading.
- Provide a summary of the key priorities within the Comprehensive Education Plan; include interim goals and use the available benchmarking data to measure progress towards them.
- Make learning objectives more explicit in class so that students are really clear about what it is they are expected to achieve.
- Rationalize the varying systems for assessment so that they are more easily manageable and consistent across classes.
- Use the wide range of data available to track the progress of key sub groups more strategically.
- Strengthen the use of assessment data to inform more focused differentiated instruction within the classroom.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

During her five years in post, the principal, supported by her cabinet, has made some significant strides in developing the school. The increasing use of data and its analysis has led to more systematic approaches to monitoring student progress and informing instructional practice. The building has been decorated and, along with the lively displays in classrooms, provides a bright environment in which students' work is regularly celebrated. There are many pieces of students' writing on display, for example, as this has been a particular focus for the school this year. Teachers provide good opportunities for accountable talk and students enjoy the challenges set for them. The school is committed to developing well-rounded individuals and provides a good range of recreational activities to complement the academic studies. There is a strong sense of collaboration amongst all adults in the school, resulting in a caring environment in which students feel valued and which parents appreciate. Professional development is an important feature in the school with a good focus on both major priorities and individual needs.

The school recognizes the progress that has been made and is clear about the next steps to be taken. It has the determination and capacity to undertake them.

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 is scrutinizing a wide range of data so that it is able to both monitor performance and check the progress of students. State test results are used to check trends and make comparisons with similar schools. The school has been particularly interested in monitoring the English language arts results, which showed improvement in 2006, as this has been a specific development priority over the last few years. For the younger students, the school uses the Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System to identify strengths and weaknesses in language skills.

Benchmarking data for monitoring reading levels for both individual students and across classes has been established so that progress can be tracked on a regular basis. The school is currently working on developing a similar approach for mathematics. In addition, teachers use interim assessments, Princeton reviews, Grow reports and informal observations to identify not only individual progress but any patterns in skills that require specific attention. The school has analyzed students' responses to both English language arts and mathematics assessments and noted, for example, the need to continue to develop comprehension and writing skills. Data is used carefully to identify special education students and English language learners so that focused interventions can be planned for them. The progress of students attending the after-school program is carefully monitored.

The school has noted the differences in the achievements of boys and girls, for example, but does not systematically monitor the progress of sub groups according to categories such as gender, special education and English language learners. It does, however, recognize the value in doing so in order to support its development priorities.

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 principal’s commitment to maximizing the achievements of all students informs the setting of whole school goals and targets within the Comprehensive Education Plan. Planned steps to secure improvement are also articulated in the document.

Focused grade meetings in the summer and the beginning of the school year are used to scrutinize data and to set goals and targets for the forthcoming educational year. Staff work collaboratively and use their knowledge of the students, plus the State expectations, to plan a suitably challenging program for each class. This shared activity leads to a common understanding and awareness of what is to be achieved over the year, particularly with regard to English language arts. The school is currently developing more rigorous goals for mathematics. Data has been used carefully to identify those students who would most benefit from being in collaborative team teaching and bilingual classes. Teachers are aware of the level of language proficiency of identified English language learners within their classes so that they can plan the necessary support. The school has recognized the need to strengthen this aspect of the staff’s work. Teachers and academic intervention staff also work closely together to set appropriate targets for special education students and plan suitable support programs for them. Teachers use the benchmarking data to group students in their classes for activities such as guided reading, for example.

Parents are happy that the school is working hard for their children and are aware of the expectations set. They feel well informed about what is happening through curriculum meetings, workshops, newsletters and discussions with teachers. Progress reports and report cards give helpful feedback on how well their children are doing. Parents also consider that they are given useful guidance on how to support their children, with homework for example. Students themselves feel that the staff have high expectations of them and they are eager to achieve the goals set. The school has built up many links with organizations such as Healthy Foods, ‘Education through Music’ and the Freeman Foundation, all of whom are fully supportive of the aims of the school.

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 provides a curriculum which is suitably aligned to mandatory requirements. There is a strong focus, from early childhood onwards, on developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. This is appropriately balanced through other subject areas such as science and physical education. The school’s links with ‘Education through Music’ enables

every student in the school to receive music instruction, which they enjoy. The well attended after-school program provides valuable support.

Teachers recognize their responsibility for ensuring that students progress as well as they can and are fully committed to both their academic and personal development. Data is being used increasingly effectively to group students and inform planning. There are good examples of instructional practice throughout the school, with teachers encouraging accountable talk in pairs and groups. Students want to do well and respond positively to the tasks set. Learning objectives are not always sufficiently explicit, however, so that they are less clear about what they are expected to achieve. The school has identified the need to improve differentiation in class, particularly with regard to meeting the needs of special education students and English language learners. The wide variety of recording systems currently being used by teachers to note students' progress is not helpful in this regard.

The principal has reflected carefully on the needs of the students to ensure that budgeting decisions, staffing, resources and scheduling are aligned to meet those needs as fully as possible. In addition to meeting academic needs, support from the Healthy Foods team, for example, is helping to promote a whole school approach to eating a balanced diet. This reflects the caring environment of the school which is valued by the students, who feel very comfortable about approaching adults if the need arises. The school's proactive approach to tackling absenteeism has resulted in improved attendance, which currently stands at 92%. Students appreciate the rewards for good attendance and are eager to receive them.

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.

The principal is well respected for her calm and purposeful leadership. Her aims for the school have been the driving force behind her focus on changing the culture of the school to one of greater collaborative decision making. She has also concentrated on building the capacity of staff in their analysis of data and the implementation of the workshop model of instruction in class. These skills are carefully considered when appointing new staff. Greater collaboration is now evident, with cabinet members meeting regularly to support the principal in her work. The workshop model features in every classroom and data analysis is becoming increasingly well embedded. The principal's quiet determination and experience underpins her capacity to secure further change.

Professional development has been central to addressing these priorities and the school has a carefully planned program based on needs identified through the analysis of data and individual discussions with staff. Through the strong links with the Teachers College program and Hunter College, staff regularly attend workshops and provide mentoring support to other colleagues. Information is turnkeyed so that all teachers benefit from the workshops attended. The literacy and mathematics coaches, along with the staff developer, also provide focused in-house support for individual staff. Teachers value the feedback from both the formal and informal classrooms observations that the administration undertake. The professional development program has been effective in improving practice although the school recognizes the need to further refine it in order to strengthen differentiation in class, especially for special education students and English language learners.

The staff are enthusiastic and appreciate the common planning time to plan, share practice and evaluate instructional programs. The collaborative culture that the principal has been eager to establish is evident in their discussions. The close partnerships that the school has forged mean that the linked organizations are actively engaged in promoting its goals for the students. The school runs smoothly on a daily basis, with systems and procedures well understood.

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 provides an extensive analysis of goals to be achieved and the actions required to meet them. It is not, however, an easily accessible document for staff and does not have clearly articulated interim goals which would help the administration and faculty to determine overall progress at key points throughout the year. The benchmarking data for reading is a positive step in the right direction, but the school has yet to use it as a strategic tool for this purpose. Benchmarking data for mathematics is at an early stage of development.

Regular cabinet meetings enable progress with specific initiatives to be discussed and evaluated. Teachers are using data satisfactorily to review the progress of individual students and to revise goals and plans for them if it is necessary. Assessment data is also used to identify how well specific developments, in writing, for example, are impacting on groups of students so that instructional plans can be adjusted in the light of evaluation. The academic intervention team regularly review the progress of students at risk and, similarly, make adjustments in programs where required.

The school recognizes that progress has been made with its priorities and has a clear understanding of where further improvements are required.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Jacques Cartier School (PS 102)	∅	✓	+
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	