



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Assemblyman Angelo Del Toro

Public School 108

**1615 Madison Avenue
New York
NY 10029**

Principal: Lourdes Arroyo

Dates of review: January 24 - 26, 2007

Reviewer: Denis Pittman

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

Public School 108 is an elementary school located in East Harlem. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding. There are 690 students enrolled. The school population is made up of 64% Hispanic, 34% Black, 2% Asian or White. The school provides for students who are recent arrivals to the country, and they become its English language learners. These students constitute about 9% of the whole school population, with Spanish as the dominant language. All of the special education students come from its home zone. Approximately 17% of students have individualized education plans and receive the full range of support services. These include related services such as speech and language, counseling and occupational therapy. Attendance levels, at around 94%, are above those of similar and state schools.

The school has recently embarked upon extending its instructional program to include students from the 'middle school' grade range. Currently the school caters for students up to grade 7.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision for the school which is based upon high expectations for both students and staff.
- The school promotes a strong family culture in which students and staff are valued as individuals.
- The collection of data is very detailed and is used well to monitor and review the progress of students.
- Staff are hard work working and self-critical in order to improve their performance.
- The budget is used efficiently and effectively to promote student's learning, progress and active engagement with the curriculum.
- The curriculum provides an extensive range of enrichment activities.
- The school is well run, providing a safe and orderly environment for everyone.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and value the work it is doing to help their children.
- The school has effective monitoring and review procedures to evaluate its work on a regular basis.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to support staff in the development of subject specific rubrics.
- Provide professional development for the administration in diagnosis of assessments for students at-risk.
- Improve the differentiation of instruction in mathematics.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

PS 108 is an effective school which has high expectations for each student. It values them as individuals and seeks to find and develop their specific talents. The principal leads the school very effectively; all staff know their students well and are committed to raising achievement. Individual students are supported well and are given the help which reflects their particular needs. This is particularly relevant because of the high proportion of English language learners and special education students. The help and support students receive is based upon good relationships and mutual respect. Teaching is purposeful and students concentrate and behave well. They enjoy school, and in particular the opportunities provided in extension activities such as in music, art and chess.

Staff use data very effectively to monitor and analyze students' progress and, as a result, student achievement is good given their relatively low starting points. Professional development takes place in an environment of support and constant dialogue about student achievement. The school is developing the effective use of technology to facilitate its instructional programs. Parents are very satisfied with the progress their children make.

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 has very effective systems for collecting data of all kinds relating to the performance and progress of individuals and groups of students. Apart from the collation of standardized scores which come from the City testing procedures, each teacher is required to compile an assessment binder. The cross referencing of this data, which has been built up on the basis of recent and past assessments, gives an accurate picture of each student's achievement and progress. This information is used to identify students at risk of falling behind and those who, with increased effort, could improve their scores and move up a level. The school has built up its own substantive data about the literacy capability of students in kindergarten through to grade 3 by using a software program called Voyager. This system identifies the relative competences of a student in relation to reading and is part of the school's balanced literacy program. The school is able to effectively analyze its data across classes and within the grade levels. The quality of the data enables the school to make effective provision for those students who are English language learners. Along with special education students, these two cohorts are of particular concern to the school. Both groups represent a disproportionately high percentage of students performing at level 1 in both reading and math. However, the bilingual students have shown a sustained growth in language skills so that the overwhelming majority passed the state test prior to grade 3. In consequence, the school has met its targets in reading and math for the last three years. The administration is

conscious of its performance against similar schools and provides evidence to the senior leadership team as to how well the school performs comparatively.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The principal has worked diligently on collecting and analyzing a wide range of assessment data to gain a detailed awareness of precisely at what level each student is performing. This information is then made available to subject leaders and teachers who are expected to use it to inform their curriculum planning and instruction. The sustained progress that students are making owes much to how well data is used to drive forward the school’s agenda of improving performance. In this context a particular focus for the school is to improve independent reading. A range of strategies have been introduced which include a ‘morning message’, ‘poem of the week’ and the modeling of reading strategies for the students through the teacher reading aloud. Given that the administration provides the overview for this work, the collaboration between staff is a major factor in sustaining these improvements. The discussions within grade levels are an important aspect of promoting common goals and plans to address the needs of students. The school is concerned about improving the performance and achievement of its special education students. Significant resources have been allocated to creating manageable group sizes. Strategies to support the students include intensive academic intervention, differentiated instruction and after school programs. The school is aware of its need to continue to refine its processes for assessing students who are at risk.

Students are aware of the high expectations of the principal. These expectations are conveyed to staff and parents through regular meetings about the progress of students. Given the local origins of the principal she is able to identify strongly with the hopes and the challenges faced in the community. She sensitively and openly relates to parents her own story about the importance of the ‘legacy’ of a good education. Students are appreciative of the extra help that is given to them by staff in order for them to make improvements in their work. The useful data exchange of information between teaching colleagues and some of the parent body enables the school’s goals to be reinforced. For example, the focus on independent reading forms part of such collaborative discussions.

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

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The school's curriculum is closely aligned to the analysis of data and reviews of outcomes. Assessment information is used well to identify programs and interventions to supplement the mandated curriculum to ensure that students make good progress. A significant commitment to improving the efficacy of curriculum outcomes in relation to reading is the creation of leveled libraries in each classroom. The staff enjoyed involvement in a significant collaborative exercise to create this valuable resource for students. These actions have significantly contributed to the effective implementation and establishment of

uniform independent reading periods throughout the school. This has led to the development a literacy curriculum binder for each grade. Teachers are held accountable for their student achievement, partly through grade discussions but also in addition to the one-to-one meetings which are held with members of the administration. In these meetings there is a close examination of the data and discussion of the way forward for each student. Discussions are firmly based on improving teaching methodologies and using the work of other teachers to improve their practice. Staff are working together on the development of subject rubrics. The school recognizes that there is a need to achieve greater consistency in the way that teachers differentiate the work of students to match their levels of ability within math classes.

The analysis and use of data is central to decision making in the school. The budget is used creatively to develop curriculum opportunities such as the leveled libraries described above. Staffing decisions appropriately reflect student need. The intervention strategies for English language learners are provided with the necessary support staff to make the program work effectively. The good progress these students make is evidence of the success of this commitment. The scheduling of common preparation time enables the sharing of ideas between staff and the promotion of cohesion and continuity in their instructional programs. The work completed in these sessions is reflected in the way that students respond positively to the activities which are presented to them.

Attendance and punctuality are good. Attendance levels are higher than similar schools. The school takes good care of its students, who are confident that they can bring any concerns to members of staff. In lessons students are attentive and concentrate well on their work. These factors ensure that students continue to make good progress.

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.

The school carefully selects staff using a range of criteria, mainly to do with teachers' interest in developing students' learning, a willingness to be a team member and a commitment to professional learning. The school is successful in retaining staff and appointing staff who share the school's values.

Professional development programmes evolve from the commitment to improve student achievement. The principal recognizes the importance of professional development and is creative in the use of resources and time to ensure that an adequate provision is made. For example, teachers have received training in the use of technology in their classrooms. Staff are now more confident about the use of computers and laptops and this work is enhancing the quality of instructional activities related to the writing process. Most classes are using one or more of the following to support writing instruction: classroom computers with Internet access, Smart keyboards and wireless laptops.

The principal is respected for her professional knowledge and her capacity to make change happen successfully. She has created a supportive environment where staff feel valued. The principal and the assistant principal regularly observe teaching and give constructive feedback about the outcomes of these observations. They are fully aware of the strengths and areas for development of all teachers. They plan collaboratively along with other key staff, such as the math and literacy coaches, to improve instruction. A

particular focus has been on the need to improve the use of subject specific rubrics to support the assessment process. The impact of professional development is closely evaluated using data from the monitoring of students' and teachers' performance.

The school is welcoming to students, parents and visitors. It is managed well and effective systems and procedures ensure that the school runs smoothly. Students know where to go and what to do at all times. The school works well with outside agencies and institutions. The school maintains strong ties with the New York Philharmonic. A visiting artist enhances the students knowledge and appreciation of classical music, promotes an awareness of musical composition as well as supporting students in their learning of how to play the recorder. Parents are encouraged to take part in the school. The school is becoming increasingly successful in promoting greater family participation and support. The range of activities includes a 'welcome back-to-school breakfast', 'meet the teacher night' and a variety of workshops related to fitness, health and nutrition and the use of technology.

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.

The school has drawn up a detailed Comprehensive Education Plan which is the focus for what the school is seeking to achieve. Teachers are actively engaged in this collaborative work in setting the goals and targets for the school. It outlines how the needs of all students are to be met, including effective intervention strategies and programs for those students in greatest need. The school reviews the outcomes of these plans well. The analysis and use of data collected in these reviews is central to the school's strategies for improvement. This work has guided the school's decisions in focusing upon improving writing and developing strategies to promote independent reading. Staff at all levels are actively encouraged to take responsibility for assessing and analyzing students' progress so as to identify requisite changes and take remedial action where necessary. The school has shown itself to be adaptive in its use of assessment procedures. For example, the introduction of the Voyager software program has produced a substantial evidence base in relation to students' competencies in reading. The effective review procedures which the school has put in place show that it has the capacity to sustain change and improvement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Assemblyman Angelo Del Toro (PS 108)	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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