



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Audubon School

Public School 128M

**560 West 169 Street
New York
NY 10032**

Principal: Rosa Argelia Arredondo

Dates of review: February 01 - 03, 2007

Reviewer: David Tobin

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Audubon School, Public School 128M, is a pre-kindergarten to grade 5 school. There are 891 students enrolled. Nearly 94% of the school population is Hispanic. The remaining ethnic groups are 4% Black and the remainder from other cultural backgrounds.

There are 89 students (10% of the total number of students) in special education classes. They are taught in two collaborative team teaching classes in first and fourth grades or in five self-contained classes of which three are bilingual. A little more than half of the student population are English language learners. The percentage of students known to be Title 1 eligible (90%) is significantly above the average for City schools and slightly above the average for similar schools. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal ensures that data is collected and analyzed thoroughly as a means of contributing the school's continuing improvement.
- The school's analysis of its State and City test results reveals where students are making the most progress and pinpoints where further improvements is needed.
- The principal has promoted a strong sense of unity and collegiality among teachers, and other professionals through collaborative planning and joint decision-making.
- Members of the cabinet work closely with the principal to support teachers in aligning instruction methods to the school's curriculum.
- Parental support has been achieved via the school's effective channels of communication and strong parental representation within the school leadership team.
- Students' attendance year-on-year for the last three years has improved to such an extent that it now exceeds the average for all City schools.
- The process of aligning instruction to individual needs is contributing to improved attendance figures and has helped students to be enthusiastic learners.
- Priority has been given to developing teachers' expertise in relation to assessment, varied phonics and literacy programs for English language learners and special education students.
- The school has been successful attracting and retaining well-qualified, experienced and enthusiastic teachers who share the principal's vision and values.
- Portfolios of students' written assignments and the displays of students' work reflect the emphasis that teachers give to celebrating and recording students' achievements.

What the school needs to improve

- Gather evidence to show that teachers' professional development translates into improvements in students' grades in English language arts.
- Extend further the capacity of all staff to use data regularly to adjust their planning and instruction and to evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction
- Continue to engage the students in making judgments about their own progress and performance and in negotiating targets for their further development.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The Audubon School is successful in many aspects. The school is capably led by the principal and the cabinet. The school's vision and values have been articulated clearly and the school's philosophy is shared by the teachers and other professionals who work at the school. Teaching staff are well qualified and experienced and they liaise effectively with other professionals. Teamwork and collaboration are actively promoted. Parents are very satisfied with the school; they recognize the progress that their children make, speak highly of the relationship between home and school and are strongly represented on the school leadership team. Parent workshops are well attended.

The major challenge facing the school currently, however, is how best to lever up the standards in English language arts. A strategy has been devised to address this issue, notably with regard to the needs of English language learners who make up more than half of the school's population. The initiative is taken in the context of high student mobility rates and budget constraints due to the decrease in enrolment.

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 makes effective use of data to analyze students' needs. State and City test results are used to check for differences in the students' performance by ethnicity, gender and disability. They indicate also where progress is being made and where further improvement is needed. This evidence, together with data obtained from the Grow Report and Princeton Review, is disseminated at faculty conferences and grade meetings and considered by school leaders. In addition, teachers assess the achievements of individuals and groups of students through the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test as well as through their own assessments. The school's testing program is recorded in an assessment calendar as are the dates when scores are collected and disseminated.

The school's data analysis has identified substantial improvements, most notably in science and mathematics in State and City tests. Since 2004, the numbers of students achieving Level 3 and 4 has increased. There is no complacency, however. All teachers are aware of the stubborn remainder of under-achievement evident in students' results of English language arts. Although the data reveals a 20% improvement in the numbers of students achieving Levels 3 and 4 in the last three years and the halving of student numbers achieving Level 1, English language learners remain over-represented in the cohort of students falling below the standard expected.

Systems are in place to address these issues. As a Reading First school, assessments are undertaken regularly and analyzed by the administrative team. A pre-kindergarten

class has been established recently to support pupils with special educational needs. Other initiatives include booster sessions for students working at level boundaries, regular test practice and familiarization, more differentiated instruction, common planning time for teachers, and Saturday classes for the students. The school shares its data with similar schools in the local area to enable it to benchmark its performance and monitor student progress over time.

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.

School leaders have promoted a strong sense of unity and collegiality and responsibilities are delegated appropriately to assistant principals, who work closely with colleagues in helping to plan instruction and set goals to enhance students’ learning. Goals are set for improvements in student performance, but some of these tend to be general rather than specific. The school’s action plan targets improvement in all students’ performance in English language arts. In response, teachers, at grade and subject conferences, have collaborated to promote language proficiency across the curriculum. The improved performance of English language learners is given the highest priority. Specific achievement targets, within a challenging time scale, are set for English language learners from kindergarten through grade 5. Goals in individual education plans are reviewed regularly and new targets set. The progress of all special education students is subject to a termly special education audit.

At the classroom level, portfolios of students’ written assignments and the displays of students’ work on hallways and in classrooms throughout the school reflect the emphasis that teachers give to sharing, celebrating and recording students’ achievements. Classrooms display grading rubrics in English language arts and mathematics to show students the levels they are expected to achieve. In the best practice, students themselves are involved in making judgments about their own progress and performance and in negotiating targets for their further development. This practice is not yet consistently established.

The school has worked hard to secure the support and co-operation of parents and caregivers through its effective channels of communication and strong parental representation within the school leadership team. Parents are kept fully informed of events taking place within school and data relating to the students’ academic performance is shared at parents meetings and parent-teacher case conferences. Parents and caregivers are welcome in the school and parent workshops are well attended.

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 curriculum is aligned to meet students’ needs. In science and mathematics, the development of speaking, listening and writing skills have emerged as important aspect of lesson planning. At the same time, the teaching of English language arts has emphasized

the development of students' written expression using writing frames. These initiatives are having a positive impact on the quality of students' work. Students' portfolios and displays of their work in classrooms and corridors reveal the students' ability to draft and edit pieces of work and adopt the features of a genre.

Teachers work individually, in pairs or as members of a grade cohort to develop and plan lessons geared to the school's goals. Common planning time has been beneficial in helping teachers to learn from each other and deciding how best to use resources to support instruction. For example, a fifth grade English lesson plan, drafted during collaborative planning, challenged students to extend their non-fiction writing by expanding sentences and making use of "juicy" words. The use of a brief "turn and talk" activity, a clear statement about the lesson's outcomes and a review of the target vocabulary with students, were issues rehearsed in teachers' common planning time. Formative assessment is used effectively to identify how best to identify the next learning steps for students with special educational needs. There remains the need, however, to extend further the capacity of some staff to use data to adjust their planning and instruction.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling are data-led. Resources are used to good effect to support instruction and a comprehensive range of text books, materials and equipment is available.

Teachers, support staff and the school's social worker monitor attendance figures daily and maintain close working relationships with parents. Absences are followed up rapidly and home visits made when necessary. The encouragement given to the students to accept personal responsibility for coming to school has been particularly successful and students are reluctant to be absent for whatever reason. The students themselves report that lessons are interesting and pitched at a level that they can understand. As a result, the school's average attendance rate over the last three years is 94%, a figure that exceeds the average for City schools.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient with some well developed features.

The school has been successful in attracting and retaining well-qualified, experienced and enthusiastic teachers who share the principal's vision that the students' needs must drive the process of teaching and learning. New teachers are carefully selected via a rigorous interview process in which the applicants' capacity to learn and their positive attitudes to students are assessed.

While professional learning opportunities are available from external sources, the most effective learning comes from teamwork, in which school data is reviewed, instruction planning is undertaken collaboratively and improvements considered in the light of the school's goals. The principal is involved in learning walks as well as formal observations as required, and provides critically constructive feedback. Inter-class visitations and one-to-one peer assistance are used extensively as methods of developing staff expertise and building capacity of all teachers. Teachers report that learning walks provide valuable opportunities for them to visit each other's classrooms and observe good practice with regard to the use of rubrics, the use of formative and diagnostic assessment and matching instruction to students' individual needs.

The goals of professional development are aligned closely with the targets identified in the Comprehensive Education Plan, the administration's goals and the State and City mandates. As a result, teachers recognize the need to acquire the necessary skills to understand and make use of data effectively. The school uses a diagnostic tool to assess staff needs and invites teachers to complete surveys and reflection sheets to prioritize personal professional development goals. Limited evidence is available, however, about how teachers' professional development translates into improvements in students' grades in English language arts.

The principal has an excellent rapport with colleagues and a passionate commitment to students and their families. Teachers express unqualified confidence in the leadership of the school and appreciate the principal's energy, enthusiasm and clear sense of purpose. The school runs smoothly and efficiently; routines are well established and are known and understood by staff and students. The school works collaboratively with community-based organizations to provide students with extra-curricular activities and social and emotional support. The Police Athletic League is one of such agencies and has the longest relationship with the school.

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 monitoring of students' progress is an integral part of daily instruction. The school makes effective use of its Comprehensive Education Plan as a tool to influence school development. Teachers understand fully how teaching and learning at the classroom level have a profound influence on the school's capacity to meet its declared annual objectives. Within the plan, clear, measurable targets are specified. The plan outlines further the strategies by which such targets may be accomplished. This approach makes explicit the agenda for review and evaluation of progress throughout the year.

Teaching and learning are kept under constant review by both teachers and senior staff, and adjustments made to plans and interventions as necessary. Students' progress is a priority agenda item at grade and faculty meetings where examples of good practice are shared and discussed. English language arts and mathematics interim assessments are administered as per the schools' assessment calendar. Data is disaggregated and disseminated to teachers to help match instruction to individual needs. Conscious of the need for students to improve their grades year-on-year, Saturday test practice sessions have been introduced and push-in and pull-out sessions are provided for students whose progress show signs of dipping. These measures are proving to be effective and their impact is monitored regularly at cabinet meetings. In addition, a series of special education audits tracks the progress of students in self-contained and inclusion classes throughout the academic year.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Audobon School (PS 128)	∅	✓	+
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	