



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Juan Pablo Duarte School

Public School 132

**185 Wadsworth Avenue
New York
NY 10033**

Principal: Xiomara Nova

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Reviewer: Derek Lever

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Juan Pablo Duarte School is located on Manhattan's Upper West Side. It has 962 students enrolled from kindergarten through grade 5. The school's population is made up of 91% Hispanic, 4% Black, 3% White and 2% Asian students. Approximately 11% of students are newly arrived in the country, principally from the Dominican Republic. Over 50% of the students are English language learners, a much larger proportion than found in similar and City schools. Students are offered a choice of English classes with support or dual Spanish and English classes. At 16%, there is a higher proportion of special education students than in similar and City schools. Attendance rates have improved steadily in recent years and currently stand at 95.3%, exceeding similar schools and City figures. The school receives Title 1 funding.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Whole-school improvement planning includes clear, measurable goals, timescales and detailed actions.
- The vision and determination of the principal, her cabinet, the school leadership team and administration gives clear direction to the school's work.
- There is a family atmosphere where each student is valued, cared for and guided.
- Portfolios of student work contribute well to the school's assessment information.
- An organized system of record keeping gives good information about each student.
- A strong partnership with parents encourages good support for the school's work and their children's education.
- Staff work effectively as a team and so support each other well.

What the school needs to improve

- Use the analysis of the performance of different groupings in the school to gain a sharper view of their progress and plan interventions and instruction to accelerate this progress.
- Develop teachers' use of assessment and data analysis so that outcomes are used more rigorously to improve the quality of instruction.
- Extend the range of teaching methods and strategies to boost learning and engage students.
- Share the information and outcomes of all team discussions with all staff members.
- Enable teachers to share good practice more regularly.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The school faces many future challenges, especially in its quest to raise the academic performance of students. The principal has shown effective leadership in the two years she has been in her position. Colleagues and parents support her. She has a clear vision and a determination to push ahead with the school's improvement priorities. The principal, her cabinet, the school leadership team and administration work well together and are mutually supportive. Given this and the commitment of all members of the school family to the students in their care, the school has the capacity to effect change.

Parents acknowledge a noticeable improvement in the school's overall effectiveness. Attendance has improved, and incidents of inappropriate behavior have reduced as new and established staff make their presence felt in a positive way. However, there are areas that require further improvement. Teachers have access to a wealth of data, but their use of it is still too limited. There is good understanding and analysis of results at classroom and within grade level, but teachers do not compare performance between grades to gain a whole school overview as to why some methods prove more successful and some groups of students make better progress than others.

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.

This is a school rich in data. Most of this data is based on test scores, though teachers are beginning to use other assessments, such as asking students to assess and reflect on their own work, to broaden the range of information being collected. There is an organized system of record keeping that identifies and tracks students' progress clearly. Teachers maintain portfolios of students' work that is assessed to show what students know, understand and can do. These enhance the running records that teachers compile daily during conferences with their students.

Led by the principal and her senior colleagues, teachers have access to and have some understanding of externally generated data. Through it, teachers monitor ongoing progress at student, classroom and grade level. As yet, the information is not used to check progress from year to year and to identify trends or to ask whether groups of students are making enough progress, especially English language learners, ethnic and gender groups, and higher-achieving students. The school has begun to analyze the performance and progress of groups of students who need extra help to reach grade standards. The school recognizes it needs to raise academic achievement further and understands that this includes determining why the school's results are as they are each year and how well it performs in comparison with similar schools.

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 school works through a collaborative process to compile the Comprehensive Education Plan which sets subject and grade goals each year based on an analysis of test results and the school’s own assessments. Goals are broken down into smaller interim steps and action plans detail these and who will be responsible and involved in implementing the initiatives. For example, in English language arts, the goal of raising the achievement of students who need extra help to learn is layered into smaller goals complete with appropriate timescales and all resources required. The timescale that accompanies actions written into the plan is ambitious but necessary to accelerate the pace of change. Regular reviews of the plan avoid time slippages, enable progress checks and give senior staff an up-to-date view of areas for which they have responsibility. The way the outcomes of these meetings are translated directly into planning classroom instruction to effect successful learning is less effective. However, the school has started to tackle this issue and teachers are becoming more reflective and self-evaluative.

Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of special education students. Individual education plans, to address the needs of these students, are comprehensive, clear and regularly reviewed by all interested parties, including, where appropriate, the students themselves. Plans to raise the performance of English language learners are in place and programs are now beginning to accelerate the progress of this group of students. The family ethos of the school determines that each student is acknowledged to have needs and great effort is put into supporting them. For example those students who are performing within reach of the next higher level receive extra attention.

Parents are well informed about the life and work of the school. They appreciate the ‘open door’ policy and the lengths the school goes to in ensuring they have access to information in a format that they can understand. The school tries extraordinarily hard to involve parents and give them the skills to help their children at home, including for example meetings, workshops, English language classes and one on one conferences. They think that their children are expected to work hard and many judge the effectiveness of the school by the degree to which and speed with which their children learn to speak English.

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 is very aware that raising academic achievement overall is an urgent priority. While results over the past few years have improved, the Comprehensive Education Plan shows how more can be done to improve achievement of different groupings. This is through an improved curriculum and better quality teaching and learning. This is to be achieved, for example, by linking the mandated curriculum with the school’s own supplemental curriculum. In addition to the mandated curriculum and the school-inspired curriculum, there is a range of extended day opportunities, for example Project Arts,

Saturday tutoring, computer, sports, music and dance which support and enrich students' learning.

Teachers are accountable for the quality of their instruction and many use different resources, approaches and methodologies to achieve their aims. Some planning identifies how work will be or can be targeted to match students' needs more closely and leading to faster progress. Most differentiation is by outcome in that teachers respond to student needs during lessons. Limited support is built into lesson planning. Questioning is normally used to elicit information rather than challenge students' thinking. Many lessons are delivered in the same way and not enough attention is always given to planning teaching methods that engage and excite all students. Some teachers have flair and imagination in abundance but their skills are not shared, partly because of the lack of real knowledge of what teachers in other grades are doing. The size, shape and layout of the buildings make teacher interaction difficult.

Budgeting decisions are driven by the priorities identified by the school. Priorities always respond to students' needs. For example, in order to reflect and serve students' bilingual needs, the school has purchased a range of teaching and learning resources. Staffing decisions have not been driven by data until recently. Scheduling decisions are based on data, such as making sure enough time is given for intervention programs.

Students are generally engaged by lessons. The school considers every aspect of students' development. Students are cared for and feel able to go to their teachers, those with guidance responsibilities or any adult should they have issues or concerns of a personal or academic nature. Attendance has been and remains a school priority. There are effective systems in place to monitor absences which all trigger early responses. Good attendance is recognized and celebrated.

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 team has been strengthened by recent recruitment. Staff has been selected because they embrace the school's philosophy and what it is endeavoring to do. Energy, enthusiasm, belief and willingness to go the extra mile, mixed with dedication and skill are some of the required attributes. Fellows in the Teach for America program move back home and to other states as their commitment comes to an end after two years. This means there is a greater turnover of teachers than desirable. This transience in staffing is a barrier to continuity and consistency.

The principal frequently observes teaching, both formally and informally. High quality is celebrated and where improvement is required it is indicated sensitively. The principal's supportive approach ensures other colleagues who monitor follow her lead. The comprehensive program of monitoring the work of the school includes classroom visits, walkthroughs, assessing students' work and teachers' planning. Colleagues give good support but neither the monitoring outcomes nor self- and peer-assessments are consistently aligned with professional development. Teachers reflect critically on their own performance and they are open to further engagement. There is an appropriate commitment to increased professional development opportunities for staff to link data analysis and assessment outcomes rigorously with teaching and learning to plan for differentiated instruction.

The school's collaborative team approach to problem-solving and decision-making ensures information is shared at leadership level. Teachers meet in grade teams to plan learning and discuss openly the quality of instruction. Too little information from these meetings is shared formally with all members of staff in order for everyone to have a clear view of the school's overall goals and planned action. The principal is well respected by staff and parents and puts huge effort into fulfilling her role. Students also respect her and how she operates. As one said, "She's mad if you're bad and happy if you're good." Above anyone else, she acknowledges the need for the school to move forward, further and faster. She knows that academic achievement, particularly but not exclusively of the English language learners is in need of improvement. On a day-to-day basis, the school runs smoothly and procedures are clear.

Partnerships with several community-based organizations, including the Columbia Presbyterian Hospital and Alianza Dominicana, enhance opportunities for learning and link the school with its wider community. Parents are kept informed of all school issues and are invited to be involved in the life and work of the school, partly through the active parents association. English language classes are available to parents some of whom take part in the Learning Leaders' parent volunteer program.

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 principal, her cabinet, the school leadership team and administration meet regularly to evaluate and review the school's overall effectiveness. They review data and use it to shape their discussions and align their goals. Everyone is given equal air time and all opinions are respected and considered. The Comprehensive Education Plan is monitored and reviewed regularly and changes made to goals and action in response to the outcomes identified in data analysis. At the end of each year, an overall evaluation of the school's performance leads to the setting of the following year's goals and action planning.

Comparisons of student progress within classrooms and across grades are made regularly. These feed into evaluations of whether progress of plans and interventions is being made. However the school is measuring how much progress is being made rather than asking itself whether enough progress is being made. As a result, the realignment of practices and resources to improve students' future academic performance at a swifter rate is not sharply enough focused. Although senior staff compare how much progress students are making year on year from grade to grade, the information is not clearly shared with teachers so that they can make responsive adjustments to instruction.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Juan Pablo Duarte (PS 132)	∅	✓	+
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	