



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Anna M. Short School**

**Public School 146  
421 East 106 Street  
New York  
NY 10029**

**Principal: Laura Silver**

**Dates of review: January 24 - 25, 2007**

**Reviewer: Candido DeJesus**

# Content of the report

## **Part 1: The School Context**

## **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**

### Information about the school

Public School 146 is located just off the East River and the Franklin Roosevelt Drive, at the edge of an area known as Spanish Harlem. There are 517 students enrolled in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Almost 30% are special education students. One third of the students in the school have mandated individual education plans. English language learners make up about 13% of students. Approximately 62% of families in the school community are of Hispanic origins. African Americans are the second largest ethnicity at 33%.

Approximately 99% of students are Title 1 eligible which is much higher than for similar and City schools. Student attendance is approximately 92% which is generally in line with similar and City schools.

Public School 146 is the only barrier-free school in its school district and has physical plant modifications to service non-ambulatory students. Over 40 health paraprofessionals are assigned to service disabled students.

### What the school does well

- The principal, with the support of her assistant principals and staff, provides inspirational and effective leadership.
- The school maintains a very effective and flexible intervention program, in particular servicing special education students.
- The school is welcoming and supportive of students with disabilities, many of whom are non-ambulatory and require special personnel and medical services.
- The staff consistently engages in professional development activities as a collaborative process in order to set rigorous goals for planning and improvement.
- The school is well organized in how it uses its budget and resources to meet the academic and social development goals which result from evaluation of student data.
- Strategies to build capacity and leadership result in high quality work and substantial collaboration among teachers in sharing their craft and best practices.
- The school has continued to demonstrate academic and social improvement.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to implement strategies for the differentiation of instruction so that all teachers become well developed in this area.
- Make better use of paraprofessionals assigned to students with individual education plans to assist teachers in the instructional program of the school.
- Provide a range of programs to help parents understand how they can support the academic improvement aims of the school.

### Overall Evaluation

**This is a proficient school with some well-developed features.**

Public School 146 collects and uses data effectively to formulate its plans and goals for students' achievement and progress. The school is very successful at melding its intervention activities with its mainstream instructional programs and schedules. This is a very positive feature as there are significant numbers of students with special needs, many with physical disabilities and in mainstream classes. The staff and general education students are very accepting and considerate of these students. The administration is very effective at coordinating the work of classroom teachers with the large number of special education service providers to advance the students' academic and social development. Throughout the year, the administration and staff regularly modify group and individual programs following evaluation of the impact of instruction and interventions.

The principal is highly regarded by the school community for her caring and nurturing style of leadership. She is adept at monitoring short-term and long-term goals for the improvement of academic achievement. She uses financial resources constructively in modifying instructional programs and intervention services.

The school was in need of considerable improvement when the current principal took over seven and a half years ago. The principal characterizes the long-term improvement effort as an extended but rewarding journey that is now realizing academic improvement and social development as well as higher school morale. The teaching staff is characterized by its vigor, positive work ethic and its high quality care of all students.

### 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 is very competent at collecting data from a range of sources. These include standardized tests such as the Princeton Review and English as a Second Language Achievement Tests. The school generates additional assessment information from conferring notes, study unit tests, the examination of readers/writers notebooks and student work-portfolios.

Reports of City-wide and State-wide examinations in English language arts and mathematics are disseminated to teachers and parents in a timely manner. The principal uses the data to make comparisons across grades, classrooms and subject areas. Performance is also compared to similar schools and the data is used to set measurable goals for all students.

Each teacher maintains an assessment folder of up to date information on each student which is used to check progress and make comparisons across the class. Teachers also carry out basic skills analyses for all students. A combination of standardized and school

generated data is used to construct student groups and to highlight specific skills for improvement for each student.

The intervention program is extensive and there is close collaboration and sharing of information between the teachers and the many different service providers. This collaboration drives interventions and differentiation of instruction, particularly for the English language learners and special education students. The school pays special attention to its large numbers of special education students with physical disabilities, many of whom require on-site medical facilities and paraprofessional assistance. There is a health clinic within the school which is staffed by nurses.

Good accountability systems have been put in place by the principal. These assure that every at-risk pupil receives not only mandated intervention services but also extra services when possible.

**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 with some well developed aspects.**

The school looks at initial data at the start of the school year or when a new student is admitted. This sets in motion a collaborative process through which the staff set objective goals for immediate and long-range improvement of student achievement. Whole school planning includes interim checkpoints and timeframes for reaching performance goals.

The administration’s role is to ensure accountability and to collect evidence to check that teachers are on target and on pace with school-wide plans. The staff is very competent at targeting plans and goals on classes and grades that have been identified as a particular focus area and on the school as a whole. Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need especially those with disabilities.

Good teamwork is the key to the successful planning and effective interventions that are instigated for special education students. Plans and goals are also established equally well for the many students with issues of social development.

High expectations are conveyed to teachers and students by the principal and assistant principals. There is a common understanding amongst administrators and staff that improvement plans and goals are crucial to the success of students and reputation of the school. They know that for total success, goals and plans must drive the activities of all members of the school community. Parental involvement is improving and the teachers are gaining experience in using parents as partners for school improvement. However, raising the level of parental engagement in their children’s learning remains a challenge for the staff. Parents are generally supportive of the school but are not fully aware of the opportunities that exist to become stronger partners in the drive to improve academic outcomes for their children.

**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 with some well developed aspects.**

The teachers examine students’ achievement data to select additional support materials to supplement the regular curriculum and to make modifications to meet the assessed needs of individuals. For example more phonics studies are being implemented in the early childhood grades in response to weaknesses revealed by the data.

The teaching staff is relatively new and inexperienced in the strategies for instruction and management that are needed with a large population of at-risk students. The administration has developed accountability procedures which ensure that teachers successfully improve their instruction and students’ outcomes. Systematic approaches are in place for teachers to review students’ work and collaboratively construct reading and writing schedules. There are clear time frames to develop the curriculum for example by introducing writing genre studies, scheduling literacy block activities and meeting deadlines for student writing. Class sizes are lower than in most schools, giving teachers more opportunities for group work and for differentiation of instruction.

The principal manages financial resources well to implement the school’s improvement plans. She makes very good use of the budget to fund additional intervention programs where most needed. Through efficient use of budget and awarded grants, the principal hires additional personnel for academic intervention services and to keep class size small. It is rare to see only one adult working in a classroom in this school and in some there are more than two staff members teaching collaboratively. The principal is particularly adept at using staff flexibly to further maximize the students’ improvements.

Scheduling decision are driven by the information derived from examining student data and adopting specific interventions to meet the needs of children. Common preparation time is scheduled for meetings and training. Extended day programs are used in the morning, after school and on Saturdays, allowing more opportunities for students to receive individualized attention. There is a test preparation program held on Saturdays.

Students relate that they usually find their classes interesting and often fun. The majority of students feel that teachers are respectful and care about their needs and well-being. Student attendance is a high priority and measures taken to improve levels are effective, as the steady improvement in attendance rates shows.

**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.**

Teachers are selected through interview by a school committee of stake-holders. The principal is very specific about the necessary attributes candidates must have to be considered for teaching positions. New teachers must know content and be self reflective particularly in terms of their own strengths and areas of need. They must see themselves as adult learners and must be willing to be team players.

The leadership style of the principal is democratic and empowering. She expects her staff to be collaborative and good decision makers when it comes to instruction. There has

been a strong effort in recent years to improve teacher continuity and to offer effective and interest-based professional training. The administration has put in place sequential action plans based on students' needs and long term goals for improvement which teachers are expected to implement. New teacher support systems include mentoring and use of master teachers to model best practices and training in behavior management and conflict resolution techniques.

The administration places great emphasis on the importance of teachers planning as teams. Planning and professional development takes place in groups during common preparation time, during lunch and after school. The administration facilitates this by maintaining a flexible approach to the daily schedule and freeing up blocks of time for teachers to meet.

Formal lesson observations are done as mandated. Much time is also dedicated by the administration to informal visits and spot checks to assure instruction and interventions are efficiently used to achieve academic goals.

Overall the school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed. Partnerships with outside agencies, such as the school health clinic, demonstrated the effective collaboration between staff and service providers.

**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 with some well developed aspects.**

Teachers assess the effectiveness of their plans and interventions for individual and groups of pupils at the end of the three marking periods. They use data reports from interim assessments and the end of intervention cycles. Careful attention to the results of periodic assessments alongside school generated data enables objective evaluation of the impact of plans and goals. In addition, the staff examines how their students' performance compares with other classes, across grades, and against other schools. There is clear evidence that everything possible is being done to improve students' outcomes.

Diagnostic measures, interim assessments and comparisons provide the staff the opportunity to revise plans immediately rather than wait until the end of the school year. When the data demonstrates that revisions are in order, teachers are confident in modifying interim and final goals for students' outcomes. Teachers have learned to plan backwards as taught in the "Understanding by Design" program. New goals are set out and teachers plan the preceding instructional steps necessary for students to achieve those goals. Teachers develop their own checkpoints and plan more efficiently because they always have their interim and end goals in mind. This flexible realignment of teaching practices and the opportunity to change interventions immediately make teachers more agile in their pacing of improvement efforts for their students academic outcomes.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Anna M. Short (P.S. 146)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

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

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

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

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