



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Patrick Henry School

Public School 171

**19 East Street
New York
NY 10029**

Principal: Dimitrius Pantelidis

Dates of review: January 30 - 31, 2007

Reviewer: Dee Wheatley

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 171, The Patrick Henry School, is located in the Upper East Side of Manhattan, New York. It shares a five storey building with two other schools; one is a small elementary school on the fourth floor, the other a middle school on the fifth floor which is being phased out as Public School 171 expands to include grades 7 and 8. Currently, the school has 553 students, from pre-kindergarten through grade 7, and next year will include grade 8.

The proportion of students with Title 1 eligibility is above the average for similar and City schools. The percentage of special education students, at 8%, is relatively low. Almost two-thirds of the students are Hispanic, just over a third are Black and the rest have Asian and White heritage. In comparison with other schools, the number of students newly arrived in this country is low, with a correspondingly low proportion (less than 2%) of English language learners. At 92.6%, the attendance is in line with the average for similar schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The leadership of the principal is outstanding and he is highly respected in the school and the community.
- Expectations are consistently high and lead to very effective instruction and learning.
- The professional development of the teachers is strong as a result of excellent collaboration and very effective support by the administration and coaches.
- The attitudes and behavior of the students are good overall and exemplary in the elementary school.
- Achievement data is used very effectively to guide and adapt instruction to meet the students' learning needs.
- Very productive collaborative partnerships with community organizations and groups enhance the curriculum.
- Good resources, display and effective use of the building provide a rich learning environment.
- There are strong partnerships with parents and they are pleased with the education provided by the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop the analysis of data to track the achievement of minority ethnic and gender groups.
- Provide realistic numerical goals in the core subjects in the Comprehensive Education Plan, based on aggregations of the good individual level data already in use.
- With the transition to a full pre-kindergarten to 8 school next year, review the curriculum and accommodation use.
- Increase the range of opportunities for students, especially those in the older grades, to exercise responsibility and independence.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

The school has been improving over a number of years under the leadership of the current principal. It received public recognition for its achievement, most recently in May 2006, when it received the New York State Education Department Award for a 'High Performing/Closing the Gap' School. High expectations are evident throughout. Relationships are very positive and both teachers and students take pride in what they, and the school, are achieving. The behavior of the students is good, particularly in the elementary grades. The transition to middle school is being managed effectively and the expectations of these students are already being raised. The use of data to track the achievement of students and adapt instruction to meet their needs is thorough and leading to improvement. The school's self-evaluation is rigorous, if slightly under-weighting its strengths.

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 the rich range of test data provided by the City and State wide assessment schedule for grades kindergarten to 7, in regard to performance in reading, English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. It also includes specific tests for English language learners and special education students. In addition, considerable testing is undertaken in-house to track the students' progress. For example, prior achievement data and teacher assessment is used to set a baseline and a projected level for each student in reading by the end of every grade. The students' progress is then tracked through monthly reading tests which show the progress made. These scores are monitored very diligently by the principal, assistant principals and coaches to pick up immediately any students not making the expected progress.

The process is followed through very thoroughly to the instruction in classes. Teachers are required to show how they are refining their strategies to improve the learning for students in four categories, identifying those 'at risk', 'approaching', 'meeting the standard' and 'exceeding the standard'. Monthly mathematics simulations are also carried out and followed up as rigorously. There is good analysis of whole-school data in comparison with similar and City schools.

The school analyses and uses individual level data very well, including good attention to the achievement of special education students, higher achievers, English language learners, and other subgroups. It could nonetheless, increase the focus on ethnic groups.

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.

This is a school with a very strong drive for improvement which is led directly by the principal. His vision is shared by a capable cabinet and well-developed staff. School goals are ambitious in that there are not only goals to raise the proportion of students achieving levels 3 and 4, but also to reduce those achieving level 1. This approach has made significant impact on the school’s results, for example, in English language arts in 2005, the proportion of level 4s increased from 45.8 to 68.6 per cent; there was also a significant decrease in the level 1s.

There is a clear and tracked expectation of growth for every child, no matter what their achievement level. Targeted support, including flexible push-in and some pull-out sessions, ensures that the needs of under-achieving and special education students are well catered for. Special education students have focused attention to their needs, involving the special education teacher, classroom teachers and, where appropriate, therapists or other service providers. In consequence, they make good progress in confidence as learners, and continue to receive the support they need for as long as necessary. Similarly, English language learners’ needs are picked up at an early stage, and good extension work enables them to flourish, especially higher-performing students.

High expectations are conveyed to parents and they are kept very well informed about their children’s progress. As well as the three mandated progress reports annually, they receive monthly updates based on the outcomes of tests. Several parents work in the school in a voluntary capacity, including as ‘learning leaders’, when they support class and extra-curricular activities. Survey and other information shows that the parents are very happy with the education the school provides for their children. They feel that it has ‘very high expectations’ and is ‘a great school’.

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

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

The school focuses strongly on English and mathematics, mapping the curriculum in both areas to ensure clear progression in knowledge and skills and to generate meaningful data. A very rich range of teaching resources and student materials has been built up so that the instruction is sharply focused and effective. There are well-provisioned resource rooms for reading and mathematics which are used very effectively in the early morning extension session. Students are confident to talk with staff and know that their personal needs are also supported.

Budgeting decisions are well aligned to learning needs. The school also draws well on local organizations and on grant funding to supplement its programs. For example, there is a full-time ‘artist-in-residence’ and the music program includes a school band, recorder and mandolin lessons. Staffing and scheduling decisions are well aligned to the curriculum and learning needs, as in the provision of English as a second language teaching for a small group of students.

Teachers use data well to differentiate their instruction and ensure it is very well matched to students' needs. The principal is monitoring the instruction stringently in grade 7 to ensure the staffing and the teaching meet the needs of the middle school students.

Routines and expectations are strongly established throughout the elementary school. The students engage well with their learning and they are well motivated to achieve. Expectations are not quite as established in grade 7, but the school has already started the process of raising the aspirations of these students. Overall, students are very well engaged, though there is a need for higher grade students to exercise even more independence and responsibility. The recently instituted school council is a good move in this direction.

Attendance is in line with similar schools and there are effective procedures for encouraging good attendance, including certificates and a grade cup for the highest attendance.

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 principal is highly respected by all stakeholders. He sets high standards for himself and has very rigorous procedures for appointing staff. He has established a strong link with Hunter College which includes providing practice placements for several student teachers each year. This enables him to spot talented teachers and has led to the appointment of a number of good students from the college. With all recruitment, he places strong emphasis on classroom practice, including the use of assessment data.

Very thorough monitoring of instruction and staff development strategies ensure the teachers' skills and expertise are well developed. There is strong collegiality and cohesion in the staff body and the teachers show a high level of commitment to the school. Grade teachers are scheduled with common preparation time so that they can plan and evaluate jointly and many do this even more frequently. Inter-visitations and peer support are encouraged and there is a well-developed induction process for new teachers.

The range and quality of the staff development is a strength of the school. The principal draws widely on research to inform the vision of what constitutes effective practice and to 'raise the bar' on the school's effectiveness. The coaches are skilled and work in a flexible and effective way with teachers. A really good element of staff development is the use of 'video studies' of instruction in classrooms to enable a dialogue about effective teaching and learning. In this way, the school has opened up the sharing of good practice, encouraging teachers to be creative in their approach and improving the consistency of teaching. The staff appreciate the high level of support for professional development and recognize that it is, rightly, accompanied by a strong emphasis on accountability.

The principal has established a range of systems for monitoring instruction and its impact on student learning. As well as the monthly progress checks, he and the assistant principals engage in very regular walkthroughs and provide detailed written feedback on recommendations for improvement.

The school systems and organization are very well established. It runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and the transition to middle school is being handled well. The school has a number of very effective partnerships with several community organizations to enrich the curriculum and develop the teachers' expertise. These include New York Cares, the Jewish Museum, the 92nd Street Y, the Museum of the City of New York and the Lincoln Center Institute.

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.

As has been seen above, the monitoring of quality is strong. There is good 'joining up' of the outcomes of the various kinds of monitoring, for example data analysis and the lesson walkthroughs, to build a picture which shows cause and effect in the teaching and learning. This evaluation is used well to check the progress of plans and see whether they are achieving the goals that have been set. Further, there is a rapid response, and clear strategies to address any identified weaknesses.

The very good level of professional expertise in the cabinet ensures not only a strong focus on instruction and learning issues but the ability to respond flexibly to needs. The Comprehensive Education Plan appropriately reflects the school's key improvement foci. However, the quantitative goals in it are not based on aggregations of the very good individual student, class and grade level data available to provide realistic but challenging targets for the whole school. This is the final piece of the picture which is needed to join up all of the school's well-developed self-evaluation and improvement practices.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Patrick Henry School (PS 171)	∅	✓	+
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