



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Public School 189
2580 Amsterdam Avenue
New York
NY 10040**

Principal: Theresa Luger

Dates of review: January 31 - February 2, 2007

Reviewer: Cheryl Baker

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 189 is an elementary school serving 1178 students in grades pre-kindergarten through grade 5. Ten percent of the population are special education students and over 51% are English language learners. Ninety-eight percent of students are Hispanic while the remaining 2% represent a variety of other backgrounds. Spanish is the predominant home language. Recent immigrants, largely from the Dominican Republic, account for nearly 12% of the population, double that of similar schools and a third more than at City schools.

Attendance and student stability, at 93.3% and 94.3% respectively, are both higher than similar and City schools. Suspensions and police incidents are far lower than at similar schools. The school is Title I eligible. The percent of the enrollment that qualifies is above that of similar schools and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leadership has effectively embraced and modeled the practice of gathering and organizing all available data to inform decision-making at the school and class level.
- Administrators support teachers in their delivery of the mandated curriculum through rigorous monitoring of instruction and quarterly reviews of teachers' assessment data.
- The principal and her assistant principals effectively communicate the expectation that all members of the school community take responsibility for improving academic achievement.
- Students feel respected by the adults in the school and understand the clear expectations the school has set for their attendance and behavior.
- Parents applaud the school for the support and guidance given to their children and for the extensive array of opportunities the school provides for their personal growth.
- The school employs numerous professional development providers to raise the quality of teachers' instructional expertise.
- Students enjoy the variety of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities provided to expand the scope of their educational experiences.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide training in the analysis of assessment and anecdotal data to better understand and address individual students' learning needs.
- Provide training in techniques for the differentiation of instruction based upon identified learning needs.
- Refine all plans relative to improved academic performance to include defined short- and long-term goals, actions, and incremental measures of success and communicate these plans to all school constituencies on a regular basis.
- Evaluate the overall effectiveness of the structure of the delivery of services for students most at risk and adjust practices as deemed necessary to best support increases in academic achievement.
- Create mechanisms to support consistent delivery and assessment of standards-based curricula in all content areas, across all grades.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal has led the school for three years. In that time it has instituted the mandated curricula in English language arts and mathematics. This is being supported through a variety of professional development initiatives. The school is challenged by the high proportion of non-English speakers and is very focused on determining how best to improve their English language acquisition. In an effort to increase achievement for all students, the school has instituted requirements for the systematic gathering of formative assessment data regarding student progress in, primarily, English language arts and mathematics. There is a strong commitment to raising teachers' use of this data in planning differentiated work for varied needs of 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 proficient.

The school has set data-gathering as a primary focus. Administrators and teachers routinely organize data from State and City assessments, periodic assessments, progress monitoring practices embedded in their English language arts and mathematics curricula and other sources into binders and files. The collection of student work provides teachers with a rich resource of information about the progress of the children in their classroom. The Reading First curriculum, used in grades kindergarten through 3, provides teachers with a particularly rich and regular array of measures of students' incremental progress. The recent performance on standardized tests of grade 3 students, the first cohort to have received the entire Reading First program, showed marked improvement over previous years.

The school's relative homogeneity and stability with respect to ethnicity and home language has enabled administrators and teachers to gain a deep understanding of their population and its needs. English language acquisition is a particular focus and student assessments with respect to English fluency guide placement decisions and support decisions. Special education students are monitored through their individual education plans. With respect to gender, higher proportions of males are represented in these populations. While the school is aware of this, deliberate analysis of the possible causes remains a goal.

At the administrative level, comparisons of the school's performance with respect to elementary schools in the same area of the City are routine, especially with respect to the programs used for early literacy. The principal is keenly aware of the need to ensure that students are receiving the type of English language arts instruction best matched to the characteristics of the school's population. She and other administrators routinely monitor the progress of students by classroom and grade level, especially in English and

mathematics. Attention to quantifiable progress in science, social studies and other subjects is less routine.

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 leadership team analyses assessment and survey data to set the annual goals and actions embodied the Comprehensive Education Plan. While the team meets twice per month to discuss school issues, the lack of incremental indicators of progress on school goals limits the ability to measure short-term gains accurately. The principal’s performance review sets forth annual targets for improvement that also reflect congruency with the Comprehensive Education Plan. The linked professional development plan further defines actions relative to improvement in English and mathematics and identifies training targets. While all members of the school community may not be informed as to the content of these plans, their overall goals drive the activities of school leaders as they guide and inform the expectations of teachers, parents and students.

At the classroom level, teachers monitor the progress of all students through the collection of work and formative assessment data. They meet with their respective supervisors three times per year to review, in particular, the progress of students who have been identified as potential hold-overs, and to identify students as candidates for special interventions.

Special education students and English language learners receive particular focus with respect to program development and assessment of progress. Several additional supports exist to supplement their learning. Progress in meeting annual improvement targets for English language learners remains a goal, although they did perform better than their counterparts at similar and City schools on State tests in English and above similar schools in mathematics in the most tests. Special education students performed similarly in both subjects, although the adequacy of support for students identified for academic intervention services is a concern for the school. However, challenges in finding qualified personnel to adequately staff some desired programs persist.

Parents feel confident in the school’s ability to meet the needs of their children. A large active parent group is kept apprised of the progress of the school through mailings, meetings and the actions of a highly effective parent coordinator. Parents enjoy close and welcoming relationships with their children’s teachers and with the principal. They feel comfortable in communicating their concerns about the educational program such as the apparent shift in focus between the reading program used for the early grades and another one used at grades 4 and 5.

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’s curriculum in English language arts and mathematics meets the requirements of the City’s mandates. The Reading First program, used through grade 3, has the

capacity to generate an abundance of fine-grained data with respect to student's incremental progress and is proving effective in increasing student learning. The English program in place at the upper grades incorporates the routine assessment practices characteristic of balanced literacy. Everyday Mathematics, used systemically, contains end of unit tests to help teachers monitor progress. The delivery of the curriculum in science and social studies, while guided by State standards, varies across grades and classes and is not assessed uniformly.

Teachers are held accountable for instruction and outcomes through administrative practices such as requiring the collection of student performance data, the routine review of lesson plans, regular informal class visits and the tri-annual analysis of student progress with assistant principals. Teachers are encouraged to differentiate the activities embodied in their instruction and to allow for flexible grouping based on assessments of student understanding. Instruction is, for the most part, varied and engaging. Regular and routine differentiation based on individually identified instructional needs is not yet consistent practice.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling are informed by student performance data, and the overall goals included in the Comprehensive Education Plan. For example, funding for the adoption of the Reading First program was based on analysis of the needs of school's population for phonics-based instruction. The identification of students needing academic intervention services drives staffing decisions with respect to support personnel. The scheduling of push-in and pull-out interventions for students is based on their identified needs for English language, special education or academic intervention services.

Students report feeling very safe and well cared for by their teachers and the principal. They like coming to school and value their learning. Attendance and promptness are encouraged by teachers and administrators and the current attendance rate is 94%, higher than similar and City schools. Students appreciate the programs in the arts that enrich their learning during and after the school day. Some younger students did express disappointment in the disruptive behavior of some of their older colleagues and the school has instituted measures to address discipline issues.

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 principal and her administrative team model shared decision-making and meet regularly to address the needs of the school, including professional development and personnel. Hiring is collaborative and criteria include academic preparation, recommendations, the ability to demonstrate an exemplary lesson and familiarity with the instructional programs used by the school. Increasingly, facility with data analysis, especially knowledge of those derived from running records, conferencing notes and assessments of reading progress, is a deciding factor in offering a position. Staff turnover and fewer qualified candidates in areas of high need have hampered the school's ability to ensure the highest quality instruction for all students. Administrators monitor instruction on a regular basis, formally and informally. They are quick to address areas for improvement and to provide suggestions. While the schedule does support common planning time for all grades, the practice of teachers visiting others classrooms is not well embedded in the school. Collaboration among teachers at grade 5 is hampered by insufficient common planning time.

Professional development has been strongly focused on the implementation of the mandated curriculum in recent years and the school supports a rigorous schedule of training by consultants and staff developers. Coaches for English language arts and mathematics also provide effective support to teachers through modeling lessons and collaborating in lesson planning. Teachers also receive monthly professional development from assistant principals at grade level conferences and from the principal at faculty conferences. Additionally, the collection and organization of student assessment data into portfolios and data binders has occupied teachers' professional development time especially during the 2006-2007 school year. They have not yet had sufficient training in how to analyze and make use of all the data collected, nor in the application of the results of that analysis to the differentiation of instruction.

The school partners with a variety of agencies to enrich students' lives and to provide effective additional support for stated academic goals. A full after-school program provides children with a nutritious snack followed by a good range of academic and test preparation support.

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.

Plans such as the Comprehensive Education Plan, the principal's performance review and the professional development plan focus on student progress and inform the overall activity of the school community towards increasing annual student achievement. Greater specificity with respect to timelines and short-term goals would improve their effectiveness. Structures such as the school leadership team, the administrative cabinet and the professional development calendar support the monitoring of progress. The overall lack of incremental benchmarks of progress towards goals limits the school's ability to measure interim progress and adjust plans accordingly.

At the class and grade level, the tracking of student progress through formative and other assessments by teachers and administrators is effective in diagnosing student weakness and planning for adjustments in instruction or program. Increased focus on these practices is sharpening teachers' understanding of what their students know and are able to do. The use of periodic assessments such as the Princeton Review is variable among teachers, some fully utilizing the components of the program, while others do not, indicating a need for further training

Progress of students with academic intervention, special education or English language learning plans is more routinely monitored through structures embedded in these programs. When progress is deemed insufficient, attempts are made to provide alternative supports. Nonetheless, the school's administration and teachers are fiercely committed to moving each student forward and constantly seek out new avenues for support.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 189 (PS189)	∅	✓	+
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	