



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Isador E Ida Straus School**

**Public School 198**

**1700 Third Avenue  
New York  
NY 10128**

**Principal: Sharon Jeffrey-Roebuck**

**Dates of review: January 16 - 17, 2007**

**Reviewer: Mike Doran**

# Content of the report

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

Information about the school

## **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**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Public School 198 is a pre-kindergarten to 5th grade community school located in a multicultural neighborhood on the upper east side of Manhattan. It shares the building and some facilities with a selective public school for gifted and talented students.

Its current population of 526 students reflects the cultural diversity of the neighborhood. Forty nine percent of the students are from Hispanic families, 24% are Black, 15% are White, and 12% are from Asian and other backgrounds. The school has a growing population of recent immigrant arrivals.

There are a growing numbers of special education students (49). The proportion of English language learners (7%) is below that of City and similar schools. The percentage of students eligible for free lunch (100%) is high compared with City and similar schools. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The current principal took up post just over two years ago, and there has since been a significant level of reorganization within the school with a staff turnover of 50% and the establishment of a new cabinet.

The school has a strong commitment to enabling students to achieve both academically and in terms of personal development. The number of students meeting the standards in tested grades are similar to those found in similar schools and across the City. Attendance is in line with City and similar schools. The number of suspensions is very low compared with similar schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal provides very good leadership through her visibility around the school, her openness, clear vision and direction, and her hands-on approach.
- The principal is supported by professional and committed teacher and administrator teams.
- The school provides a calm, orderly, safe, and very supportive learning environment.
- Staff are committed to the school and parents hold the school and its staff in high regard.
- Students are well behaved, and have a positive, responsible, and enthusiastic attitude to their learning.
- Staff have high expectations of the students, leading to good levels of achievement.
- Staff support one another, and are well supported by a planned program of professional development aligned to the needs of the school.
- The school's academic intervention team, working closely with the pupil personnel team, provides effective and timely support for students causing concern.
- Literacy teaching is well developed throughout the school and makes good use of the workshop model of differentiated lesson planning informed by classroom assessment and the use of student performance data.
- The literacy and math coaches provide very effective professional support to the grade teaching teams.

### What the school needs to improve

- Further develop classroom assessment and recording in mathematics to better inform and adapt differentiated lesson planning and the setting of challenging goals
- Further extend the analysis and use of student performance data in setting goals, monitoring the progress of the school's comprehensive education plan, and informing the timely revision of plans at the whole-school level.
- Establish a system for recording the progress and intervention strategies used for individual students from the point of entry to inform receiving grade teachers and the planning for instructional support and personal development.
- Further develop the use of computer technology as a tool for teaching and learning and to support the management and use of student data.
- Ensure that the physical education program to meet mandatory requirements.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

Since her relatively recent appointment, the principal has been successful in giving the school a clear vision and sense of direction, and has established high expectations of staff and students.

The school's strong focus on reading and writing, with the effective use of the workshop model of instructional planning, underpins the school's good levels of achievement in standardized tests, and points the way forward for further developing teaching in other areas of the curriculum.

The school's greatest strength lies in the detailed picture it builds up of each of its students, enabling it to quickly identify students who are under-achieving or at risk, and to put in place effective support and monitoring programs that respond to the students' needs.

Areas for improvement identified in this report are mainly concerned with ensuring consistency in the gathering and effective use of data across the school, and with further extending the systematic collection, recording and analysis of data to inform planning and the monitoring of progress at the classroom and whole-school level. The school is well placed to carry-out such further improvements.

### 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 undeveloped.**

The school gathers a wide range of data relating to the performance and progress of individual students. The data collected is particularly comprehensive with respect to English language arts and associated intervention support strategies. Teachers maintain comprehensive records of students' assessments in the class. However, data collection in mathematics is far less systematic and there is considerable variation between teachers and grades in how assessments are carried out and records kept. A similar picture occurs for the other curriculum areas.

Performance data is analyzed by the school's cabinet, and by grade teams working in collaboration, to monitor the progress of each student, to indicate next steps in learning, and where necessary make referrals to the academic intervention team for more detailed monitoring and support. Gap analysis is also used to identify and rectify particular weaknesses in the instructional programs and their delivery. Again the emphasis is strongly on literacy and on recent and current student performance, rather than taking a more in depth and longitudinal perspective of students' progress from their individual level starting points on entry.

Data management is largely paper-based and teachers would welcome the use of technology to help their management and analysis of assessment data.

The school has systematic procedures for monitoring the progress of every student throughout the year to identify underachieving students and those at risk, and timely contact is made with parents during each marking period to address any concerns.

The recent and current progress of students, class by class, grade by grade is analyzed to inform whole-school planning, and some comparison is made with the previous school year. However, the school recognizes the need to further extend data collection for longitudinal comparative analysis and for student sub-group analysis.

**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 features**

The principal has high expectations of her staff, who in turn have high expectations of their students. The current progress of students is monitored closely, and where there are concerns, parents are involved and students are quickly referred for intervention assessment. The student case studies carried out as part of this review clearly demonstrated that the staff know their students well, and that the academic intervention team and the pupil personnel team work together very effectively to support underachieving students and those at risk.

The analysis of data to inform lesson planning, learning goals and next steps is strong in reading and writing. However, the school recognizes that the data from standardized tests passed onto teachers, and data from their own assessments in the classroom, need to be more rigorously and consistently integrated into planning for students’ next steps and the setting of challenging goals for the students across all areas of the curriculum.

The school also recognizes the need to further extend its use of data to inform planning and the setting and monitoring of goals at the whole-school level through taking account of longitudinal comparative data and the analysis of student sub-group data.

The school has well-established collaborative working at grade level in developing the curriculum, instructional programs and assessment. The high level of trust that exists between staff means that teachers reflect on their working practice and support each other through the sharing of good practice and observing each other’s teaching.

The literacy and mathematics coaches are very effective in supporting teachers and grade teams in the development of their teaching, the collection, recording and use of data to inform lesson planning and referral to academic intervention support where needed.

The school communicates clearly with parents and involves them from the start in their children’s learning. A rigorous system of progress reports, record cards, and teacher-parent conferencing ensures that students and their parents are kept well informed of progress and the next steps in learning to maintain progress.

**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 features.**

All teachers are involved in curriculum development as they review and evaluate the impact of their teaching through grade level and faculty conferencing. In this way the school has been generally successful in developing its curriculum and instructional programs to meet the needs of its students.

Lessons are generally well planned and structured following the ‘workshop model’, and differentiated by the well judged use of individual and group activities. Lesson planning is clearly strongest for reading and writing, where the workshop approach is well developed. Teaching is good, and often of a high standard. Students are generally engaged by the teaching and the instructional programs provided.

Computer technology is recognized to be a powerful learning tool in the classroom, but its use is yet to be fully realized and is an area of development for the school.

Students are well behaved, and have a generally responsible attitude towards their learning. Attendance is now in line with City-wide and similar school averages. Student attendance is monitored closely and pro-actively pursued. Staff know their students well, and students are very appreciative of their open-ness and approachability. They also confirm that the principal’s open-door policy works in practice.

The school has recently experienced a 50% turnover of staff and the appointment of a new cabinet. The principal carefully selects and deploys her staff drawing on their individual expertise to meet the needs of the school. The current performance of the school is regularly reviewed through cabinet and school leadership team meetings drawing on a range of performance data, both formal and informal. This process informs key decisions about the budget and resources, including staffing. Appropriate levels of funding are focused on the professional development of staff, and on the school’s improvement strategies and goals identified in the school’s comprehensive education plan.

The school has not been able to provide the physical education component of the mandatory curriculum since the beginning of the school year due to the gymnasium being closed for maintenance and the lack of a qualified teacher for this curriculum area.

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

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

Since taking up post recently, the principal has managed a substantial staff turn-over and the resulting need to recruit new staff. She has established a detailed system for staff selection using a range of criteria and procedures, such as modeling a lesson, and the involvement of her administrators and other lead staff in a rigorous interview process. The staff composition reflects and provides role modeling to the multi-ethnic intake of the school.

Professional development is aligned to the needs of the school and is focused on a continuous drive to improve student achievement. It is well planned and managed by the cabinet in consultation with staff, and draws upon the monitoring of the school's current performance. Discussion and debate in grade teams is an important part of professional development, and for staff to reflect on and share their teaching practice. Staff expertise is deployed effectively to support grade teams, through collaborative planning and teaching.

The principal's 'zero tolerance' stance has established the school as a calm and orderly place, and is welcoming to students, parents and visitors. The principal, assistant principals, and other lead staff are well respected by the parents, and provide a model not only of the high expectations of themselves but also of their care and commitment to students and their families. The principal is clearly seen by the school community to have the capacity and determination to drive through school improvement plans, and to make any organisational changes to the school that are needed to achieve this.

The principal and assistant principals regularly and systematically observe instructional practice and provide feedback to teachers, which in turn informs planning for professional development. This process is well documented. The coaches are very effective in following through with professional support as appropriate. The Teacher's College provides considerable support to teachers in developing the school's instructional and support programs for reading and writing. Lesson observation also serves to point teachers at good classroom practice in the school, and they are encouraged to observe each other's teaching.

The school pro-actively seeks partnerships within the community to provide opportunities for the development of broader skills, interest, enrichment and extension activities to interest and engage the students. Examples include the Beacon after-school program, "Rosie's Broadway Kids" program, "Town hall", Stanley Isaacs Neighborhood Center. Parents and organizations provide additional direct support in the classroom, for example volunteer parents as "Learning Leaders" and from New York University.

**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 school consults through a range of constituencies inside and outside the school in its decision-making. Teachers have a consultative committee, students have a students' council, and parents have an active parent-teacher association. These key groups are well informed by the leadership of the school and feel they have a voice. In particular the parents gave examples of influencing lunchtime transition arrangements, and the establishment of the "learning leader" program.

Staff at all levels are clear that they have responsibility for collecting and using assessment data to monitor students' progress, to inform their planning, to set goals for students, and to plan and revise interventions according to need. This is strong in the teaching of English language arts and in planning intervention support for students causing concern. However, the school recognizes that this is not always systematically and consistently carried out by all staff and across all areas of the curriculum.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is a working document, reviewed regularly throughout the year, and overseen by the school leadership team. In addition, elements of the plan are reviewed in the cabinet meetings and in the principal's regular discussions with the grade teams, and the intervention teams. Where aspects of the action plan are slipping or not having the expected impact, steps are taken to quickly rethink and revise the plan of action. However, on a longer time-frame, parents feel the school leadership team could play a stronger role in reviewing the progress of the school using performance data to inform their consideration of options for school improvement.

The school also recognizes the need to extend the depth, longitudinal analysis and use of student performance data to better inform the annual Comprehensive Education Plan and other linked plans about the comparative performance of specific student groups, to take account of the starting points of students through consideration of value-added performance data, and to monitor and adapt the school's plans and goals.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Isador E Ida Straus School (PS 198)</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	