



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Alain L Locke Elementary School

Public School 208

**21 West 111th Street
New York
NY 10026**

Principal: Susan M Green

Dates of review: June 4 - 5, 2007

Reviewer: Terry Brown

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

This elementary school is located in Harlem, and has 254 students enrolled in grades 3, 4 and 5. Sixty-eight percent of students are Black and 31% Hispanic. English language learners comprise 8% and special education 25% of the students. Attendance is higher than similar and City schools at 93%. Seventy-five percent of students are known to be eligible for Title 1 funding, which is lower than similar and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The highly effective principal is respected by the whole school community for vision, clear leadership, open communication, knowledge of the children and for developing a community environment that has both structure and care.
- Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data.
- Responses to the monitored impact of changes are flexible and agile.
- Comprehensive data is gathered on all students and is available for use.
- The supportive assistant principal and the dedicated and professional staff work together collaboratively for the benefit of the students.
- Students are actively engaged in classrooms.
- Students report they are able to talk with adults about any problems, and they know they will be dealt with.
- The staff appreciates the extensive opportunities for professional development, all of which is aimed at improving their instruction and therefore the performance of the students.
- Staff and students appreciate the flexibility of scheduling related to student needs, and extension activities in which teachers give something of themselves.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue developing the culture so that all staff feel accountable for gathering and using data to enhance instruction for all students.
- Encourage all members of the school community to engage with goals and plans for improving student performance.
- Ensure all staff are involved with, and utilize professional development opportunities.
- Develop an understanding amongst students that they are responsible for assessing their own performance, progress and behavior.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The administration has a clear understanding of the school. In a comparatively short time the principal, who was appointed in October of 2006, has been able to analyze the school's position, harness the goodwill, experience and expertise of the adults in the school, and sensitively but firmly make progress towards her vision for improvement. The attendance, lateness, behavior, and performance of the 3rd grade students, in particular in basic literacy skills, all needed attention. There was insufficient teacher understanding of collection and use of data to differentiate instruction. Interventions have been put in place, including activities supplementing the mandated curriculum, to deal with these issues, while fostering attention to the use of data, goal setting and planning. A great deal of external support has also been accessed by the principal to promote school developments.

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 gathers objective and standards-based data from City, State and other external sources and from internal teacher-generated assessments. The data is collected and analyzed by the administration to see progress of each student, classroom, grade level, ethnic group and academic subject area. The data is available for their own information when in conversation with individual students and teachers, and for the classroom teachers and others to use to inform instruction.

During this year, attention has been paid to the data related to English language learners and special education students. Other categories of interest to the school include students with attendance below 85% and those who were within 10 points of scale scores in levels 1 and 2. The school measures progress in relation to past performance and to the performance of similar schools.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Data has been analyzed by the administration to prioritize and set goals for the school and for various groups of students. The Comprehensive Education Plan is revisited three times a year. Some whole school and specific goals and plans are being attended to. The previous high incidence of inappropriate student behavior has been addressed by Project

Charter, a program designed to build integrity within students, and by Peace Games, which helps develop conflict resolution and coping skills. These, along with initiatives to improve attendance, have had the result that more students are in school, for more of the time, and are better able to focus on their work.

Performance in mathematics has improved over the past few years since the introduction of the Wilson program. This will be continued and extended by training of more staff. Mathematics streaming occurs in which students are grouped by greatest need of improvement and receive targeted instruction. Small groups of students who were ten points above or below scale score in both mathematics and literacy are provided with test preparation by Green's team, which comprises the principal, Miss Green, the assistant principal and the coaches. Holdover students have a personal intervention plan. Additionally, the academic intervention services team, along with classroom teachers, work collaboratively with the school-based support team, comprised of a school social worker and psychologist, to assess students in greatest need and determine next steps for both the child and the family.

As a result of greater sharing of information about student performance and required improvements, parents and students are aware of the high expectations the school holds for them. The detail and implementation of the principal's instructional vision, which emphasizes the use of State standards and data to drive instruction, is clear to some teachers but not to others. Teachers are beginning to develop their ability to identify the various forms and purposes of data in setting goals and plans for improving student performance and 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.

The school follows the mandated curriculum. Assessments carried out three times a year inform changes of curriculum and student grouping which in turn generate more meaningful data about progress. Many teachers now collect relevant data for assessment binders and attend well to the needs of specific groups of students. However, teacher accountability, and the use of data to inform differentiated instruction is not consistent throughout the school.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are effective and start with ensuring a reduced class size, so that all students receive more attention on a daily basis. A substantial grant has been acquired to reward work done in promoting independent reading. This has been used to level library books and to fund after school programs. Teachers College consultants, additional staffing and scheduling changes respond to student needs and school plans effectively. Implementation of the arts, in particular music and dance, has encouraged students to have a greater interest in their school life. The students report that they share, rather than fight, and they feel they can turn to teachers and the principal for advice.

The secretary prints monthly attendance reports for classes and individuals. Correlations with performance are made for those with less than 85%. Parents are presented with the information as a conversation, instead of as a confrontation, which can help clarify any personal situations affecting the student's attendance and performance. As a result of these conversations, appropriately tiered responses are implemented.

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.

Few staff have been hired this year, the focus being on developing the ability of current staff to work collaboratively to accelerate the learning of each student. As a result of the principal's observation that common preparation times have had little impact, a substantial variety of professional development opportunities have been arranged, both to further the school instructional vision and to address teachers' observed and requested needs. Some teachers are formally observed by the administration and coaches, and then provided with a professional development program to improve their performance. Observations are repeated only after the completion of the program in order to give sufficient opportunity for these improvements to be made.

Regional professional development has been accessed for science, social studies and the academic intervention service. The Teachers College literacy consultant has worked with groups and individual teachers. Collaborative team teachers have regular visitations to other schools. Gifted and talented workshops have been made available to relevant teachers, including those not wishing to take a gifted and talented class, but who wish to improve their classroom practice. Inter-visitations are encouraged or, on occasions, mandated. Tenured teachers who demonstrate good practice are partnered with newer teachers to offer support and guidance. The principal has conducted professional development on topics such as analyzing Princeton Review results, and observations of the assistant principal modeling read alouds have been mandated.

Leaders and faculty evaluate and revise plans in teams. The principal is respected, professionally and personally, for her capacity to effect appropriate change for the benefit of the school, the staff and the students. Greater attention to providing and reinforcing structures and procedures this year, in particular related to attendance and behavior, has led to the school running much more smoothly. Attention to youth development and academic goals in partnership with many outside bodies has had a considerable impact on the life of the school and the motivation of the students to succeed.

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 Comprehensive Education Plan and principal performance review are working documents, frequently annotated, reviewed and revised by the administration in light of assessment scores and other information as it emerges. The administration provides, and demonstrates that they are aware of, diagnostic and progress data about individuals and groups of students. The staff is encouraged to use the data provided and to collect and analyze their own in order to inform plans and interventions.

A wide range of changes have been introduced during this year designed to encourage students to attend school, to accept and follow appropriate structures and procedures, and

to be involved in their learning. These appear to be having the desired effect. The staff is becoming more involved in understanding and contributing to the revision of goals and plans in light of student data being collected and analyzed in a more frequent and detailed basis.

There are flexible and agile responses to the monitored impact of changes. The school is carefully considering a step by step movement to formalizing structures which measure the impact of strategic decisions. The administration is encouraging all members of the school to take responsibility for gathering and using data to drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Alain L Locke Elementary School (PS 208)	∅	✓	+
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	