



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Paula Hedbavny School

Public School / Middle School 278

**421 West 219th Street
New York
NY 10034**

Principal: Maureen Guido

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Reviewer: Ted Solow

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

The Paula Hedbavny School opened in 2004. It is a kindergarten through grade 8 school located in northern Manhattan. There are 459 students enrolled at the school, of whom 89.4% are Hispanic, 6.9% Black, 2.8% White, and 0.9% Asian and others. There are more male students (55.2%) than female (44.8%). Spanish is the home language for most families. English language learners are served in self-contained bilingual classes and by push-in and pull-out services. These students presently constitute 35% of the student body, a much higher proportion than in other schools across the City. The proportion of students new to the country is similar to that in other schools. Most of these students were born in the Dominican Republic, with others from Mexico and Pakistan. The proportion of special education students is below that of other schools. The average daily attendance is 91.8%, which is comparable to similar schools throughout the City. The school has received Title 1 funding for the past two years.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The staff describes the principal as visible, caring, and supportive of their activities.
- The administrative team focuses well on teaching and learning within a school culture of high expectations for all students.
- The staff is collegial and collaborative.
- The staff uses the information gathered from attainment data to address learning practices.
- A program of intra-school and inter-school visitations is provided for new teachers to observe exemplary practices.
- Classroom teachers are able to assess and address student needs by using the results of mandated tests, class assessments and student work samples.
- The academic intervention services team uses available data to analyze and address the needs of targeted students.
- The building is clean and the halls are decorated with examples of student work reflecting classroom units of study, so that students know they are valued.
- Procedures, policies and school rules contribute to an atmosphere that is conducive to learning.
- A uniform policy has been successfully implemented in grades kindergarten through 8 with support from all members of the school community.

What the school needs to improve

- Differentiate and personalize instruction to meet the needs of students at all levels.
- Expand professional development activities to focus on improving differentiated instruction.
- Create a protocol for teachers that regularly reviews their personal and professional goals and the strategies being used to achieve those goals.
- Expand parental and community involvement in the school.
- Ensure that the teachers plan for individual and group differentiation in assigning homework.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal and the assistant principal arrived in September 2004, coinciding with the opening of this new school. The principal works in an efficient manner with a largely new and inexperienced staff. Her administrative team has established a climate of collegiality and collaboration among all staff members. Clear procedures, policies and school rules contribute to an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. The administrative team and the coaches are knowledgeable in using data to drive instruction. Professional development activities are organized to include analysis of data in order to improve instruction. Consequently, item analysis, portfolio assessments, rubrics and other indicators to identify and address student weaknesses are used by the instructional staff. There is further concerted effort in the school to provide professional development activities in the area of differentiated instruction. To achieve the school-wide goal of exposure to the arts, a weekly enrichment program has been put in place to give the students an appreciation of culinary arts, creative art, music and dance. The uniform dress code in grades kindergarten through 8 has helped create a calming, friendly atmosphere throughout the school. This policy is supported by all members of the school community.

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 with well-developed features.

The school has provided all classroom teachers with data binders that include standardized test scores from English language arts and mathematics assessments, Princeton Review quarterly assessments, teacher assessments, reading and mathematics progress notes and individual and teacher conferencing notes. The data is updated and reviewed on a regular schedule. Lesson plans reflect the information gathered from the data and address the needs of the class. Teachers from each grade meet at regular intervals to review the latest data and plan units of study for their grades. Student portfolios detail the progress made by individual students. Teachers in each grade share information and lesson plans that meet the needs of the students.

English language learners and special education students are monitored for progress and extra support is given as appropriate. The pupil personnel team and the academic intervention service providers meet regularly to address the needs of English language learners, special education and struggling students. The latest data, classroom performance, teacher assessments, conferencing notes and discussions with other key personnel are used to identify students who are found to be at-risk. Extra support is then given through academic intervention service providers, the school's own special education support services and the 37 ½ minute block of extra small-group instructional time at the end of the school day.

The principal has developed a mathematics team that includes classroom teachers, the mathematics coach, the bilingual/English as a second language coordinator and special

education teachers. This team develops strategies for the push-in model of supportive instruction based on the available data as benchmarks for progress. The Princeton Review assessments provide data that allows the school to compare its results with those of similar schools and City 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 with well-developed features.

The school has established a collaborative process that allows members of the teaching staff, and the administrative team to set measurable goals for immediate and long term improvement for all students. Curriculum planning time is used to set and prepare for these goals. The coaches use individual student data to prepare targets for each pupil in both English language arts and mathematics. Teachers have individual conferences with their students and then use the information to develop an action plan in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies for each pupil. These individual goals are then incorporated in the teacher’s binders and are reviewed regularly. Each grade team then plans appropriate activities for the benchmarks they have established for targeted students and discusses them during grade meetings and with other service providers. These outcomes become the focus of conferences between the teachers and the principal. Students receive constructive comments from their teachers during individual conversations, graded assignments and monthly progress reports. Students appreciate how their teachers explain and make comments on their written work, about how they could improve and the steps they need to take to move to a higher level. High expectations are consistently conveyed in this way.

A support program has been established to work with students who have slipped from level 4 to 3 and from 3 to 2. These students receive targeted support both before and after school. Monthly professional development activities with the City College of New York are addressing the needs of level 3 and 4 youngsters. The school communicates with parents and caregivers through monthly progress reports, report cards, phone conversations (absence/lateness), parent teacher’s association meetings and informal meetings. The principal meets with the parent teacher’s association executive board and always attends and speaks at their monthly meetings. The parent coordinator also assists the principal in reaching out to parents. They are working with the executive board to expand parental and community involvement.

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 well-developed features.

Both the mathematics and the English language arts curriculum are mandated by the City and Region. The principal selected the curriculum for all other subject areas prior to the opening of the school in 2004. All selections are aligned with State standards. Data generated from interim assessments, both formal and informal, are used by grade teams to plan appropriate common activities and lesson plans. Students are continually assessed to see if they are meeting specific benchmarks. The incorporation of data in

daily instruction is discussed regularly by the administrative team. Students look forward to, and enjoy, the many fun activities in music, dance, culinary arts and creative art that enhance the school day. The school also holds a weekly 90 minutes enrichment program that engages student' interests and extends their experiences.

The teachers are held accountable for improving the quality of their teaching and its impact on student learning. The administration has conducted one-to-one meetings with staff members to set personal professional goals. However, it has yet to create a protocol for teachers that regularly reviews their personal and professional goals and plan the strategies that are being used to achieve them. However, the principal recognizes that more attention is needed to differentiate instruction based on the use of current data more extensively. This includes differentiating homework assignments for different learners. The principal has also noted a need for more student engagement and more opportunities for accountable talk in some classrooms. Nevertheless, staff know the students well and so respond to their personal development, as well as their academic needs.

The principal is an effective manager. She monitors the total fiscal picture, as well as specific needs for the students, when making hiring and purchasing decisions. She is also supportive of the technology program which supports learning in a number of other instructional activities. The school uses block scheduling, which allows time for common planning for each grade and enables the staff to meet and plan on a regular basis. The principal has set the challenging target of 95% for attendance for the 2006-2007 school year. Strategies have been incorporated to monitor attendance closely by calling homes on the first day of absence, having the family worker make home visits, sending absentee postcards through the mail and through informal parent conversations. There is also a reward program for students with perfect attendance. Consequently, this school's attendance rate is already above those of similar schools.

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.

New staff members are selected by the school-based option committee which is made up of teachers, parents and administrators. The mathematics and literacy coaches were selected based on their proven record of being dynamic teachers, well versed in the use of data, and having excellent communication skills. Criteria used for interviewing prospective staff members include their vision of how data can be used to improve teaching and learning.

Professional development program decisions focus on the use of data to plan daily classroom and grade activities. Much of the training and support revolves around turnkey training. This training takes place during grade and informal conferences between the various staff members. Ongoing staff development supports the staff in using all available data in each of the content areas. To further support these efforts, the principal has encouraged and supported a program of inter-class and inter-school visits among peers. The teachers find this helpful in enabling them to observe best practices in the use of data to improve instruction. The principal has begun to provide professional development in differentiated instruction, including homework and classroom activities. The school is training teachers not only on how to have 'mathematics conversations' which include accountable talk, but also through precise questioning, giving students opportunities to describe ways to solve mathematical problems.

The principal and her assistant principal routinely visit classes to make frequent informal and formal observations of teaching. When teachers are formally observed there is an immediate discussion of the lesson, followed up by a timely, written report. These reports usually cite how data is used in lessons and how it impacts on student achievement. Students, parents and teachers acknowledge that the principal is an effective leader who runs a good school. She has the ability to move the school ahead by setting educationally measurable targets for students, teachers and herself. The school's quiet tone is highly supportive of the work in individual classrooms. The building is clean and the halls are decorated with examples of student work reflecting classroom units of study. The school has developed effective partnerships with outside organizations that contribute to the academic program by providing after-school tutoring, a Saturday program and sports activities. The principal continues to seek additional partnerships.

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 Comprehensive Education Plan outlines procedures for monitoring and evaluating student progress throughout the year. Reviews are held on an as-needed basis. The principal recognizes that definitive checkpoints for the monitoring process are necessary in order to make adjustments before problems become too difficult to remedy. This school uses a variety of approaches to compare progress and to measure the progress of their planning. The principal sees the need for greater use of data to help plan for higher achievement rates for the students. A variety of tools, such as Princeton Review and an analysis of previous City and State tests, enable the literacy/mathematics committee to articulate monthly with classroom teachers about student progress. Teachers then group youngsters to meet needs as diagnosed by the assessments. Topics are also developed for after-school activities for students at specific levels.

Portfolios are used in every classroom. They reflect mathematics and English language arts tasks and outcomes, and are aligned with current state standards. These portfolios then become another assessment tool to be used with data to plan appropriately for each student.

One of the positive results is the demonstrated progress of students in grades K-3 in English language arts. A key component of the English language arts program was to use the Orton-Gillingham program to teach phonics. Positive feedback from staff prompted the principal to pay for staff development for each teacher involved. This is an example of how the school takes successful programs and encourages all staff members to become trained in a methodology that works.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Paula Hedbavny School (PS/MS 278)	∅	✓	+
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	