



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Alfred Zimberg School

Public School 002

75-10 21 Avenue

Queens

NY 11370

Principal: Joseph Taddeo

Dates of review: May 14 - 16, 2007

Reviewer: Louise Kapner

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Alfred Zimberg School (PS 2) is located in Jackson Heights, Queens, and serves 630 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school serves a culturally diverse population. The majority of the students, 41%, are White, far higher than in similar or City schools. Of the remainder, 38% are Hispanic, 19% are Asian, and 2% are Black. Approximately 65% are eligible for Title 1 funding which is below similar and City schools. Approximately 29% of students are English language learners. These students come mainly from Colombia. Seven percent of the students receive special education either in collaborative team teaching classes, self-contained classes or through special education teacher support services. A few students take part in the New York State alternate assessments.

The school has strong ties with the community. Families have chosen to remain in the neighborhood and strongly support the school's efforts. Attendance at 93% is average for similar schools and schools City wide. The gardens surrounding the building were voted the best kept lawn by a local community organization.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision of developing the instructional program to raise achievement and is well supported by the assistant principal.
- The school has a highly organized system of data collection which is well used to monitor student performance and progress.
- The school makes outstanding use of data to match work to the needs of students.
- The school continually reviews and revises programs to meet the needs of its students to further accelerate their learning.
- Staff work together as a cohesive team and contribute to the nurturing climate of the school.
- Collaborative planning and professional development are an integral part of the school program and very well used to support instruction.
- High expectations are part of the school culture and shared by all members of the school community.
- Students are highly engaged in their own learning and are happy and confident learners.

What the school needs to improve

- Review student scaled score results year to year to determine value added of instructional programs.
- Further disaggregate data to monitor performance and progress of student subgroups.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The Alfred Zimberg School, PS 2, is an effective school with high expectations for each student. The principal and assistant principal are a cohesive team who, along with a skilled staff, works in a highly collaborative manner to raise students' achievement. They are continually looking at and incorporating new programs to improve student achievement. Teaching is focused and appropriate to the needs of the students who, as a result, are engaged learners.

Data collection is highly organized and used effectively to monitor and analyze student performance and progress, and results in standardized tests show significant growth over the past few years. Professional development is an integral part of the school culture and differentiated so teachers can learn to meet the needs of students in the best possible way. The next step is for the school to further analyze the data of all students for value added resulting from the instructional programs.

PS 2 exudes a warm inviting environment from the outside gardens to the recently painted hallway murals. Parents, students and staff all echoed a strong feeling of community and care and respect for each other.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

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

The school has an extremely effective system for collecting data relating to student performance and progress by student, class, grade and subject area. Every teacher has a comprehensive binder which includes a wide range of past and present school-generated assessment results, Fountas and Pinnell reading levels, conferring notes in reading and writing, and authentic student work. This provides an on-going accurate picture for each student and the class. The information is constantly monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to identify needs of students, inform instruction, and monitor progress.

The principal "relies on day-to-day data to really know our children." He and the assistant principal continually monitor teachers' collection of data as well as review further reports on the progress of students and the school. The 'Automate the System' gains report is color-coded and referenced for students needing specific interventions. Results for English language learners, special education students and other groups of students of interest to the school are reviewed regularly and closely analyzed. For example, New York State English as a second language achievement test performance data was disaggregated by student and grade to determine inter-level movement. Students entering under the federal 'No Child Left Behind' Act are provided with additional support as indicated by their results on assessments. Data by ethnicity is not regularly analyzed, and the school does not compare student scaled score results year-to-year. This next step in data review can be used to determine the value added of the instructional program for all students.

The administration compares the school's performance against itself, neighboring schools, similar and City-wide schools. They monitor overall performance, results by each standardized test, by cohort and by groups of students and use the outcomes very effectively to ensure the impact of teaching and identify further areas that need to be addressed.

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

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

The school is continually reviewing data not only to sustain past improvement but also to identify areas to provide for further growth. Teachers have an excellent knowledge of their students' academic and personal development and work collaboratively to raise their achievement. Results in social studies and science standardized tests, for instance, identified the common need for all students to strengthen and develop their skill of inference. Planning together, teachers have developed instructional strategies to meet this goal. Information culled from internal assessments such as the Quick Write administered three times a year, continuous assessments while teaching, and review of authentic student work is very well used by teachers to understand what students know and can do, and to identify areas of further need.

Tiered intervention services are provided as needed and carefully monitored. Students identified by their individual education plan for mandated services or those for academic intervention services receive an impressive range of intense academic support using differentiated methods and materials. Push-in and pull-out services are provided during the day and after school. A Saturday academy provided additional test preparation. On-going conversations between classroom and support teachers enable a high level of congruence of instruction. A speech teacher clearly stated the need to "bridge the classroom" when providing services to students. Academic intervention and pupil personnel teams very effectively support the monitoring of what students are doing and planning next steps. There are examples of grade 5 students receiving Wilson training who have made significant strides and are now reading on grade level and a confident learner.

Teaching points, instructional and grading rubrics and student work reflect high expectations in the classrooms. "When I get a three I can aim higher. We know what to do to get good grades," a student said. Teachers regularly share student expectations and classroom information with parents. Messages from the principal and assistant principal appear in the monthly parent association newsletter. The parent coordinator provides additional help and she herself is a graduate of the school. Parents, who are highly involved in the school, appreciate the "well-run school" and feel "extremely fortunate."

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

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

The school’s curriculum is firmly based upon meeting the needs of all students and is aligned to State standards. The reading/writing workshop model is well developed and supported by phonics instruction for all grades. Students are highly engaged in the Everyday mathematics program and use manipulatives very confidently to support their learning. Students work on interdisciplinary projects, use computers for research, and proudly display their end-product. Books about their family’s country of origin support learning but also celebrate the diversity of the students. All teachers use assessment information in an outstanding manner to further differentiate instruction. For example, during an independent reading activity a teacher was working with a small group of students who needed further help on using context clues. The speech teacher noted those students who need additional help with language development. She effectively used Mayer Johnson symbols and teacher-made picture boards to support non-verbal students. Assessment information is also well used to identify programs to supplement the mandated curriculum. For example, despite gains on the English language arts test, the school identified the need to teach higher order thinking skills.

Teachers are held accountable for student achievement. Key elements for the data binders are mandated, but the format is flexible. One-on-one mid-year self-reflection meetings are held with the principal or assistant principal, where discussions focus on classroom instruction and planning next steps.

This analysis of data also provides a framework for thoughtful decision making in the school for budgeting, staffing and scheduling. For example, literacy and mathematics blocks, and small class size enables concentrated, differentiated instruction. Two common grade meetings a week further support the collaborative environment.

Attendance is nearing the school’s goal of 95%. A ‘Grade Race’ chart prominently displayed in the main hall tracks monthly grade and class attendance. Students are looking forward to winning! The school is very nurturing and takes very good care of its students, most of who are known by name by staff. Teachers see a “child as a total person” and they are there for whatever help is needed. Students “want to thank teachers for making it easy.” One student said of the principal, “He’s cool, has patience, and listens to every word.”

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

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

The stability of school staff and their high level of expertise enable the school to focus on continuing to improve instruction for all students. New staff go through a rigorous screening process to demonstrate their understanding of the curriculum and assessment, and need to be compassionate and a “good match.”

Professional development is extensive and offered off and on-site to enable the school to achieve its goals. Teachers participate in differentiated activities focused on their own needs. For example, the Columbia University Teachers’ College coach is working with staff

who need further help with the workshop model. Study groups and common meetings allow sharing of information with colleagues. The lab-site model encourages classroom inter-visitation for sharing and learning of best practices. The principal successfully encourages teachers to take risks to perfect their craft. Formal observations are a shared responsibility of the principal and assistant principal. Teachers appreciate the “straight to the point” feedback. Learning walks are on-going and enable constant monitoring of instruction and impact of professional development.

The school places a high emphasis on the collaborative process to address needs of students. In order to prepare for the coming year, teachers meet with colleagues a grade below and a grade above to ensure effective spiraling of instruction and identification of specific student needs. A stepping-up sheet further supports this transition. Regularly scheduled grade and faculty conferences are instructionally focused. All participants are encouraged to engage in the discussions and engage in reflective evaluation to improve practice. Teachers’ roles and responsibilities are clear and a school handbook and daily postings in the main office keep all staff informed. The principal is highly organized and well respected as the school’s leader who has brought about sustained improvement. Productive partnerships further the school’s goals; for example a recent visit by members of Junior Achievement spoke to students about understanding responsibilities.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

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

The school continually engages in meaningful planning, addressing goals and using a wide range of information for planning next steps. Delivery of services for targeted students is monitored throughout the year for effectiveness and revised as and when needed. Student data from instructional programs enables interim reassessment of progress and performance. A mid-year meeting of staff and administrators focuses on reviewing each teacher’s data binder to reflect on what’s working and what needs to be revisited and revised in order to attain the school’s goals. Data is also used effectively to identify and incorporate additional strategies for improvement as the school plans for the future

The Comprehensive Education Plan is a working document and is reflective of the school’s program. The school leadership team members are active participants in reviewing and revising the plan and often take home sub-sections and work in sub-committees to effectively incorporate new ideas and programs.

Instructional strategies for next year are presently being tested out in the classroom thus enabling modifications to be incorporated prior to September. Staff are active participants in the process of designing, implementing and revising programs and do so with enthusiasm. This collaborative process and realignment of practices are very well used to guide instruction with the goal of accelerating student progress and raising achievement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

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|----------------------------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| SCHOOL NAME: Alfred Zimberg School (PS 002) | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 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 |