



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Luis F. Simeone

**Public School 007
80-55 Cornish Avenue
Queens
NY 11373**

Principal: Sara Tucci

**Dates of review: May 16 - 19, 2007
Reviewers: Cheryl Baker, Frank Knowles**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Louis F. Simone School serves 1,133 students in grades kindergarten through grade three. Seven percent are special education students and nearly 53% are English language learners. Nearly forty languages are spoken in students' homes. Over 47% are Hispanic, nearly 43% are Asian, nearly 9% are White and 1% is Black. The school is Title I eligible with the proportion of qualifying students about equal to the City average. Attendance averages above 95%, exceeding the City average.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school provides a safe and well-organized learning environment for students.
- The school values the cultural diversity of its students and celebrates their achievements.
- The principal communicates high expectations for curriculum, instruction and student achievement.
- The school makes effective use of data to understand students' progress and their learning needs and to shape a broad and well balanced instructional program.
- Teachers are well supported by effective professional development and coaching in English language arts and mathematics.
- The school provides a wide range of specialized programs to meet the varied learning needs of its students.
- Teachers are empowered to engage in collaborative decision-making.
- Students are well known and well cared for by the administration and teachers.
- Student achievement has increased under the current administration.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine plans to include short-term goals and timelines so the school can measure progress towards its targets and make changes as necessary.
- Develop mechanisms to extend the sharing of the school's goals and plans to all constituencies.
- Extend the good relationships with parents to include a greater focus on supporting parents to help their children to achieve.
- Increase the disaggregation of assessment data with respect to ethnicity and home language.
- Continue to develop programs and resources to meet the needs of higher achieving students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with well-developed features.

The school has made significant progress in fully implementing the mandated curriculum, increasing the use of both formative and summative assessments, and raising student achievement in the two years since the principal assumed leadership of the school. Teachers are well supported in their professional development and they use student achievement data to understand their students' needs and to plan instruction. The school intends to refine its planning practices to incorporate incremental measures of progress and also intends to better share improvement plans with all constituencies.

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 and its teachers employ a broad variety of assessment practices that yield extensive quantitative and qualitative data regarding students' long and short term learning progress. Appropriate tools such as running records, conference notes, mathematics checklists, student portfolios, periodic assessments and standardized tests are used well to provide the administration and teachers with objective, constantly updated understandings of the progress of students, classrooms and grade levels.

The school has highly specialized mechanisms for measuring the progress of its English language learners which include the mandated assessments as well as routine monitoring of students' acquisition of listening, speaking reading and writing skills. The principal's expertise in the education of this group, which represents the significant majority of the school's population, adds an elevated level of routine scrutiny to enhance the analysis of their progress. Similarly, the schools special education students benefit from specialized programs and assessments mandated by their individual education plans and their progress is monitored by specialists with their program placements. The school recognizes and celebrates its diverse ethnicities and language backgrounds but does not routinely analyze student progress with respect to these characteristics.

The school has analyzed the relative progress of boys and girls on standardized State tests. Results revealed similar progress in mathematics but showed that boys lagged behind in reading. The school then researched and purchased library books dealing with topics of interest to boys to increase their reading habits. The school does not have a formal process for identifying its gifted and talented students and has limited opportunities for its high achieving students to extend their learning.

The school is well practiced in comparing its progress longitudinally and is proud of its recent increases on mathematics and English language arts tests. The school routinely compares itself with schools that have high portions of English language learners and has charted its comparative progress on four State tests assessing progress in academics and

language acquisition. Administrators and teachers routinely compare progress of students within classrooms, across grade levels and among genders. Individual and overall progress in English and mathematics is tracked as assessment results become available and are analyzed.

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

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school leadership team has developed the Comprehensive Education Plan as mandated by the State. It sets, mostly, annual goals for improving the school and its students’ achievement. Other plans such as those for safety and student discipline are annual in nature. The professional development plan expresses monthly topics. Overall, the school’s plans lack specificity with respect to short -term goals and incremental measures of progress. The contents of the plans are known to administrators and members of the school leadership team and while plans are available to teachers, parents and others, the school has not devised a method by which all constituencies are informed of goals and plans for improving student progress so that their activities can be focused on supporting the school in attaining its goals.

Assistant principals have specific grade level and programmed oversight responsibilities that enable them to effectively monitor, with staff, the progress of any student, classroom, grade level or academic subject identified as a particular focus area. Regular grade level conferences support the rigorous oversight of students by their grade level teachers. The school has instituted highly specialized instructional settings for the broad range of needs among its English language learner population. Their progress is measured by school-wide assessments and specialized assessments germane to their acquisition of skills in English. Similarly, special education students are placed in settings appropriate to their needs and their progress is monitored with respect to the specifics of their education plans. The academic intervention team devises plans and interventions for students needing extra help and the school provides in-class, morning and extended-day programs to assist students.

The school reaches out to parents through newsletters, meetings, and celebrations of student achievement. Translation into several languages is commonplace. Parents feel well supported by the school, its principal and its teachers. One noted, “What is really striking is the compassion and patience teachers have for children.” The principal attends monthly parent association meetings and provides updates on the school’s progress. The parent coordinator offers classes and trips for parents. Some parents would like specific suggestions as to how to help their children achieve.

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 has fully implemented all of the components of the Teachers College balanced literacy approach to instruction in English language arts as well as the mandated Everyday

Mathematics program. Each of these provides embedded assessments of student learning that are well carried out by teachers. Conferencing and routine checking for understanding characterize teaching, which is differentiated in the classroom by activity and further, by students' individual needs when appropriate. Teachers are expected to plan their instruction based on students diagnosed needs. They are held accountable for improving their skills and their students' progress by the administration. They routinely visit classrooms, observe teaching and check teachers' data binders. Lessons are varied and actively engage students in their learning. Students are keen to describe their lessons and proudly point out their work which is colorfully displayed around the classrooms. Students are very well behaved and like their teachers and their principal. They like coming to school and attendance is routinely above 95%. The school has a structure in place to effectively address each absence with very good follow up procedures.

Decisions regarding the budget, staffing and scheduling are informed by the analysis of student achievement data. The following are good examples of such flexibility in planning; when weaknesses at the first grade in phonemic awareness were identified on State test results, the school purchased software programs to supplement in-class instruction for struggling students. To increase achievement on the grade 3 mathematics assessment the school hired a mathematics specialist to provide supplemental in-class and morning mathematics instruction. To provide students with access to supplemental instructional software interventions, computers were redistributed from a laboratory to classrooms and personnel were rescheduled to accommodate instructional needs in social studies.

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 administration expects candidates for teaching positions to possess an understanding of the balanced literacy model, an appreciation for the needs of English language learners, strong academic credentials and experience with early childhood education. Capacity to use data is built by the school and is not currently a required characteristic for applicants. Teachers are well supported in their professional development by the principal, assistant principals, coaches and staff developers, all of whom possess expertise in various areas and provide assistance to teachers in polishing their skills in delivering the mandated curriculum. Structures such as professional development days, Teachers College calendar days, grade conferences and faculty conferences and study groups support well the delivery of professional development on topics identified by teachers and through the analysis of instruction by coaches and administrators. Daily walk-throughs and formal observations by administrators provide teachers with instructive feedback regarding their teaching. Teachers are also afforded the opportunity to visit each other's classrooms as well as other schools, especially those with large proportions of English language learners.

The school's governance is characterized by a network of teams that are overseen by the administrative staff. Collaborative decision making and reflective evaluation of plans and actions take place at grade level conferences, during common planning time, at faculty conferences, cabinet meetings and through committees such as those for academic interventions, school climate, and English language learners. To allow the staff of nearly 100 to effectively collaborate at grade conferences, these conferences were reconfigured to address one grade at a time, thus allowing the principal and 25 teachers to confer effectively.

The principal is respected for her strong organizational skills, clear demands for compliance with curricular expectations and her knowledge of instruction for English language learners. The school runs smoothly and efficiently. Teachers receive a weekly newsletter apprising them of any pertinent activities or deadlines. The school partners with several social service, health, arts, and youth development groups, each of which contributes to the wellbeing, enrichment or academic support of the students.

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's plans, overall, are characterized by long term rather than frequent interim goals, actions and timelines. While some are quite specific as to the expected outcomes and others describe clear actions, frequent diagnostic assessment of progress towards goals is not inherent in these plans. Thus, formal practices illustrating successive goal setting and improvement planning resulting from measures of interim and final outcomes are not yet embedded in the school's structures. However, on an informal basis, evaluation of progress in areas such as the implementation of the curriculum, has taken place effectively. For example, the school uses the regional rubric for evaluating the quality of the delivery of all of the components of the mandated curricula and, when walkthroughs revealed weaknesses in some instruction, the professional development plan was adjusted and resources were realigned.

At the classroom level, comparisons of student progress based on periodic and diagnostic assessments by teachers are routinely used to adjust instruction and interventions. The Princeton Review is used diagnostically at grade 3 and the Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System informs periodic assessments of student learning from kindergarten to grade 2. Remedial diagnostic assessments further inform teachers and administrators as to the progress of students with identified learning needs. Grade conferences and faculty conferences provide opportunities to investigate student work, share best practices and evaluate the effectiveness of lessons and assessment practices and make changes when warranted. Interventions are evaluated at academic intervention and pupil personnel team meetings. The school's keen interest in supporting its English language learners is informed by regular comparisons and collaborations with other similar schools. For example, administrators are currently watching the effectiveness of a dual-language at another school and, if productive, will adjust its current configuration of English language learning instructional settings to add this program.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Louis F. Simeone School (PS 7)	∅	✓	+
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	