



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Public School 029**

**125 - 10 23 Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11356**

**Principal: Jamie Adams**

**Dates of review: December 5 – 7, 2006**

**Reviewer: Anne Murrell**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Public School 29 serves an ethnically diverse population in College Point, Queens. It has 594 students in kindergarten through sixth grade with approximately 33% Asian and others, 45% Hispanic, 19% White and a very small percentage (2.52%) of Black students. Twenty seven percent of the students are English language learners. There are 63 special education students and the percentage of Title 1 eligible students, at 63.3%, is below that of city and similar schools. The proportion of students who are newly arrived in the country is above that of city schools but matches similar schools. Attendance, at around 95%, is better than in City and similar schools.

The current principal took up post three months ago, at the beginning of this academic year. Public School 29 is a collaborative community of practice school that acts in a mentorship role in the area of literacy with an elementary school in the Bronx.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has strong, effective leadership skills which have already impacted positively on the quality of teaching and learning.
- Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs of the school and the students, as indicated by the wide range of available data.
- An effective, collaborative approach permeates all decisions about goal and target setting.
- Administrators make very good use of a wide range of data to assist planning and to promote progress in literacy and mathematics for all students.
- The school is very effective in meeting the needs of those students experiencing difficulties in their learning.
- The teachers are enthusiastic and dedicated and they show respect for the students which has resulted in good attitudes to learning.
- The students enjoy school and are well motivated to achieve.
- Student achievements in State tests in English language arts and mathematics have improved over time and are above those of similar and City schools.
- Attendance is high.
- There is a warm, caring culture in the school which is constantly reinforced by the principal, staff, children and parents.

### What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that students achieve as well in science as they do in English language arts and mathematics.
- Develop writing skills across the curriculum so that they are practiced regularly with all students and more frequently with individuals who need additional support.
- Ensure that all teachers make effective use of data on a regular and consistent basis.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

**This is a proficient school with some well developed features.**

This is a popular school which is oversubscribed. It has a very welcoming culture in which staff, students, parents and visitors are valued. Teachers and students are happy to be in the school and in each other's company. The principal has a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and understands what needs to be done next to address any areas requiring development. Through assessment data and personal observations the teachers have a good knowledge of their students. The teamwork in the school is very effective in ensuring that all the information about the students is discussed and acted upon to set goals for teaching and learning. There are still areas to develop within classroom instruction however, to ensure that all teachers use their informal assessment data more effectively to focus on the progress of individual students.

Parents praise the school highly. They are happy with the way their children are being educated and the progress that they make over time. They express disappointment that the school is losing its grade 6, since it means that their children will have less time in this school.

### 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 some well developed features.**

The school collects a wide range of formal and informal data on the performance and progress of each student. The learning needs of the students are identified within the first few days of entry into the kindergarten and this data has an impact on the organization and content of instruction. The data is also used by teachers to track the progress made by individuals from a very early stage. The results in State tests and continuous assessments in mathematics and English language arts inform the teachers about the levels that each student has reached. The coaches collect, analyze and identify trends in student performance and provide support and help to teachers in order to increase their understanding of how this data can be used most effectively. Grade and faculty conferences and reviews of students' individual education plans also help teachers to identify those gaps in learning which need to be addressed either in class lessons or through extra support. The school is particularly good at using data to identify, support and monitor the progress of those students with greatest learning needs. Not all teachers however have a good enough understanding of what needs to be done to ensure that the students in their class reach their next steps in learning. At present, although there is good practice within the school, there is inconsistency in the use of informally collected assessment data to inform planning and instruction.

The principal and her cabinet carefully monitor performance and progress over time, for example, by comparing test results with past performance and the performance of similar schools, as well as within and across subjects. Trends are also analyzed in relation to gender, ethnic groups, English language learners and special education students. The

principal is in the process of scrutinizing the assessment results of different ethnic groups in order to identify any trends and patterns in performance.

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

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

Joint discussion and collaborative decision making are commonly undertaken by school leaders and faculty to set long and short term goals for improvement. These goals are closely aligned to the needs of the school, individuals and groups of students, as well as to grade levels and classrooms. Teams have been created to ensure that such decisions are made collaboratively for greatest effect. For instance, an instructional team meets to determine the academic direction of the school, while the school leadership team, which consists of parents, teachers and administration, discusses relevant issues concerning academic goals, including ways to push the learning of the students to the next level. Academic subject goals are mainly focused on English and mathematics. The school is aware, however, that test results in science did not match the students’ achievements in English language arts and mathematics, and there is recognition that there are too few opportunities for the students to write across different subject areas. The newly formed academic support team consists of the administration, coaches, the reading recovery teacher, the English as a second language teacher, the speech teacher, and the resource room teacher. This team looks at identified priority areas and student work samples, and it collectively devises plans for targeted students.

Considerable attention is paid to enhancing the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement, and those who have been identified as the most able students. Many intervention and enrichment programs take place before, during and after the school day, including Saturday, such as reading recovery, dance, music and art. Parents are kept up to date about the work being done by their child and the progress being made. Recently the school has provided translation for all information sent home into appropriate home languages. Workshops are regularly offered to parents to ensure that as many as possible are kept well informed about the life of the school.

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

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

Teachers plan how they will use the mandated curriculum to best meet the learning needs of their students within grade teams. They also decide how to assess student progress so that new goals and targets can be agreed; however there is presently some inconsistency of practice between grades. The principal is aware that this is an area which is still developing. Teachers are well aware of the need to differentiate the work given to students in order to meet the range of learning needs in the classroom. In general this is done well, however not all teachers are fully secure in setting appropriate goals for the more able students. This means that the highest achieving students are not always suitably challenged in all subjects and at all grades. Teachers are dedicated to the school and the students, and they recognize that there is still much to do to improve the consistency of their practice.

Budgeting, scheduling and staffing decisions are driven by the needs of students and teachers as indicated by test result data and through the monitoring of teacher performance. For example, a decision was made to replace paraprofessionals with a reading recovery teacher in order to address the needs of low performing first grade students. Writing has become a focus for this year following a review of the students' academic achievement in this area and the teachers have introduced writing workshop strategies into their instruction. As a response to the growing English language learner population, programs, interventions and enrichment activities have been put into place. These include a Saturday program for learning through expanded arts, and workshops geared to the parents of these students to help develop their own language skills. Enrichment activities have been provided for students who are at or above expected level performance, for instance, creating a school newspaper, chess clubs, book clubs and calligraphy.

The attendance rate is high and the school has appropriate systems in place to deal with absences. Students say that they enjoy school and find their lessons interesting. They know how much they are improving, for example in their reading skills and in mathematics. The students like the principal and their teachers; they describe them as helpful and understanding, and feel that they can always talk to the counselor about their personal problems.

**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 overall.**

The principal is a very effective leader with a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and how to address them. She has spent her first weeks in the school strengthening relationships and building effective working teams to ensure that decisions are made collaboratively. The principal has high expectations encompassed within her selection process for new staff. Senior management teams and classroom teachers hold her in high regard and are working well together to achieve common goals. They particularly appreciate the trust that the principal places in them to take responsibility for individual or group tasks.

Professional development decisions are made according to the priorities of the school and the identified needs of individual teachers. For example, to increase the teachers' knowledge and understanding of subject content and instructional strategies, as well as effective ways of using data to plan and deliver the curriculum. The effectiveness of training programs is evident in their classroom practice, where teaching is generally interesting and various strategies are used to involve the students in their learning. Teachers plan in teams in and across grades and they evaluate and modify the curriculum according to the varied needs of the students they teach.

The principal has a high profile in the school. She frequently visits classrooms and gives feedback to the teachers on the strengths and weaknesses within their performance. This has recently become a formal procedure so that teachers receive written feedback. Teachers also have opportunities to see what is happening in other classrooms and they discuss and share expertise. Many support services and outside bodies are regularly used to reinforce learning in the classroom. For example, the students make visits to a courthouse, a restaurant or an aquarium, to enrich their learning and students in grades 5

and 6 are given responsibilities which offer them the experience of dealing with real life problems, such as running a book store from scratch.

**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 at present only covers one year, but the intention is that it will be revised to cover a three year span. It is a working document and is modified and updated frequently during the school year by the instructional team and cabinet. Within the various teams, there is much discussion about the progress that students make in grades, classrooms and intervention groups, and goals and targets are modified accordingly.

There are useful individual educational plans for those students identified as needing extra support, and the agreed targets are appropriate and achievable. However, there are no specific time limits attached to the targets to promote an accelerated pace of learning.

Comparisons are made of data indicating how the school performs in relation to similar and City schools, as well as past performance, and this has made the school aware of the need to set goals for improving science within the school.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Public School 029 (PS 029)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.</b>	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>			X
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		X	

\* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

<b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			X
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>		X	
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	