



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Nathaniel Woodhull School**

**Public School 035**

**191- 02 90th Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11423**

**Principal: Mark Dempsey**

**Dates of review: November 14 - 15, 2006**

**Reviewer: Desiree Mansell**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Nathaniel Woodhull is a pre-kindergarten to grade 5 school that serves nearly 640 students. Included in that number are 27 special education students that are in self contained classrooms and 71 students classified as English language learners. The student body is diverse with Black students making up 46% of the student population. A further 28% of students are Hispanic, while 24.5% are Asian, and 1.6% are White. The percentage of students that are Title I eligible has not been determined as yet this year, but was 62% last. The school's attendance rate of 94.9% has been consistent with that of similar schools across the City.

Woodhull has had three principals in the last two years. The current principal came to Nathaniel Woodhull in May 2006 in an interim capacity and was appointed to the position in November 2006. Staff, students, and parents welcome the consistency and continuity that an appointed principal brings.

The school has developed partnerships with a number of businesses and community organizations. These valued partnerships supplement the services and supports provided by the school. These partnerships also support the school's theme that "it takes a village to raise a child".

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The administrative team is visible, accessible, supportive of staff and students, and is focused on instruction.
- The administrative team is highly effective and has earned the widespread respect of staff, students and parents.
- The staff is supportive of one another, collaborative and exhibit high expectations for themselves, the administration, students, and parents.
- A range of data from various sources is consistently generated and is accessible to the staff.
- Priority is given to meeting all of the needs of those students in greatest need of academic improvement.
- Budgeting, staffing, and scheduling decisions are prioritized and driven by the needs of the students and the school, based on data from a variety of sources.
- The school is a well maintained structure with a unified and orderly organization of procedures that are clearly defined for staff, students and parents.
- The school has established links and partnerships with businesses and community agencies that support and benefit students.
- Although the school has been labeled as “A School in Good Standing”, there remains a constant, consistent, and focused drive for improvement.

### What the school needs to improve

- Build the capacity and rigor with which teachers analyze and apply data.
- Expand professional development opportunities to increase and improve classroom strategies and techniques used to meet the needs of all students.
- Provide in-class monitoring and supports for the implementation of professional development strategies and techniques.
- Expand classroom practices that individualize, such as flexible grouping and differentiated instruction, to address the varying levels of student readiness and styles of learning.
- Make better use of time for structured, collaborative conversations about student work and what students know and are able to do.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

The Nathaniel Woodhull School staff is dedicated and committed to students and improved student outcomes. Appointing a new principal has ended the lack of stability and continuity over the past two years. The new principal has quickly and effectively assessed the schools strengths and areas of need. Working with staff, he has formulated plans to address the needs of the school. These plans have not been fully implemented and some mid-course corrections are needed. However, ideas are coming from all constituencies and morale is improving. The areas for improvement include several issues which the school has identified and is already working to improve.

The perception of the school in the community at large is becoming more positive. A parent stated, 'The school is shifting upward. Excellence will not be attained by sudden flight, but by constant toiling.'

### 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 overall with some areas of weakness.**

The school collects and compiles an enormous amount of different data to assess the performance of individual students by subject, classrooms and grade levels. Data is utilized to inform staff of the growth of special education students and English language learners. This data is made accessible to all staff members.

The most effective use of data is evident with the Bel Mondo reading program in grades kindergarten through 3, where running records are administered at specified intervals. Small flexible groupings are formed based on the results. Every student is tracked overtime and a visual representation, using the Bel Mondo Tracking Board, has been constructed to follow every student's progress.

The principal and staff realize that the analysis of data is not as comprehensive or rigorous as it should be. Additional efforts are needed to monitor student progress in terms of ethnic groups and gender and much valuable information could be gained by comparing the school's performance with that of schools in similar situations. There is a need to formulate a comprehensive, in-depth protocol for data analysis that is paired with strategies to improve the delivery of instruction.

**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’s administrative team and faculty currently engage in collaborative planning and goal setting. However, much of the collaboration is spontaneous and takes place at lunchtime, during prep periods or before and after school. As a result the outcomes of these meetings are not always consistent in their application in all classes.

The school has formed Professional Learning Teams to share best practices, to examine successes and failures, to discuss trends across grades and to participate in cross grade articulation. Data is analyzed effectively and used to plan next steps, but all staff agree that additional time is needed to plan and set goals.

Particular attention is given to those students experiencing academic distress. The Pupil Personnel Team meets every two weeks to examine student academic and behavioral issues. The Academic Intervention Services’ process is used to develop a plan for each student that is brought before the team. The goal is to develop effective strategies collaboratively, based on the academic needs of the student. Also pull-out and push-in services are provided to those students most in need, based upon standardized test data.

Students currently feel more invested in the school than in previous years. They have been given opportunities to voice their opinions, to take an active role in planning for learning, and in making decisions about what they learn. Their parents are also getting more involved. Larger numbers of parents are attending meetings and becoming active in the Parent Teacher Association. Parents are very vocal about the high expectations they have for their children and their 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 several well developed features.**

The school’s reading and mathematics programs are firmly established and align assessment, instruction, and resources. All grades are working toward improving the quality of assessment practices and classroom instruction. The literacy and mathematics coaches regularly support classroom teachers and the administrators to collaborate and discuss assessment and instructional issues. Social studies and science are not as firmly established in the school and programs and assessment regimes are still being developed. In social studies, the focus is on developing on-going assessment strategies to drive instructional practices, integrating social studies with other curricular areas and the development of key skills. In science, the foci include the development of ongoing assessment strategies, moves to improve the teaching and learning process, the integration of science with other curricular areas and turnkey training of teachers based on professional development sessions attended by the science cluster teacher. Additional professional development opportunities for all teachers of science are a clear priority.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are based on the needs identified, an analysis of available data, student needs and teacher recommendations. The principal

feels that it is important to inform and involve staff in these decisions. The improvement of student attendance is a high priority. The current attendance level of 94.9% is targeted for improvement to 99%. Many strategies have been employed to work with the families of students who have a pattern of absences and latenesses. Also, students with intermittent absences and latenesses are targeted for family contacts in a variety of contexts.

While the quality of teaching in some classes is inspirational and provides great motivation to the students, in too many classes there is an over reliance on whole group direct instruction and the principal is aware that a move to more individualized, interactive strategies is required before the level of engagement will significantly improve in some classes.

Many community agencies and businesses support and enhance the school's efforts to support students. P.S. 35 has good working relationships with Jamaica and Mary Immaculate hospitals, the 103<sup>rd</sup> Police Precinct, Community Mediation Services, Dancing Classrooms, 1444 Music and Arts, McDonald's, and Nike. All of these partnerships enrich the school environment and provide additional activities and opportunities for students to achieve academic goals.

**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 with several well developed features.**

The newly appointed principal has brought stability and continuity to the Nathaniel Woodhull School and he is greatly admired for what he has achieved in a short time. His early initiatives of common planning time, developing and enforcing a system of discipline, formation of student government, and emphasizing the importance of the Parent Teacher Association election have allowed staff, students and parents to hope again. Staff have become more willing to take on extra duties and to assume leadership roles. Parents are becoming more active in the school and in their children's education. Students feel more empowered and are beginning to take a more active role in their learning. The newly created student council gives student leaders a voice to express, dreams, hopes and concerns and to initiate projects and initiatives that benefit the entire student body.

In his efforts to build staff, the principal has emphasized that prospective teachers must genuinely like children, be able to connect with children, have the energy and desire to improve themselves, and be able to support children's growth. These attributes, he feels, are also important in building the capacity of school leadership. Teachers have a significant voice at the school level and the cabinet is comprised of the principal, assistant principal, coaches, and the academic intervention teacher. This committee meets every two weeks to discuss and make decisions about instructional issues that impact on the entire school and to candidly evaluate the effectiveness of persons, programs and initiatives. The Pupil Personnel Team meets every two weeks to examine student academic and behavioral challenges. Decisions are made collaboratively based on the academic needs of students.

The professional development plan is in the formative stages. The principal has stated that more must be done to increase the skills and effectiveness of every teacher. Improving the quality of classroom instruction in all grades by increasing the quality and quantity of professional development has become a priority. Inter-grade and intra-grade conversations, study groups, common preps, meetings and classroom visitations are a few of the strategies being considered to increase professional development opportunities.

The administrative team is visible in classrooms on a daily basis. A variety of formats are utilized to give teachers both formal and informal feedback. Additionally, the principal participates in walk-throughs with the academic coaches. There is always an announced focus and teachers receive feedback and suggestions for improvement.

**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**

School leadership has recognized the importance of built-in structures to establish ongoing assessment of student progress. Currently, common prep periods are used so that teachers can meet with coaches and teacher leaders to talk about students and student work. These periods also provide opportunities for sharing and collaborating. Some data analysis takes place to identify student strengths and needs and this information is used to develop programs that meet the needs of the students.

The development of a Comprehensive Education Plan that distinguishes between quantity and quality of efforts, provides for opportunities for smart conversations about data, utilizes horizontal and vertical levels of articulation, and develops user friendly data rubrics is a key priority. Implementation, monitoring, and the ability to accommodate corrections is recognized to be equally important.

The school has made progress toward reaching some of these goals, but much more work is needed with widespread staff participation. Currently, the school cabinet meets regularly to analyze data and link data to instructional decisions. The resource teacher and the academic intervention teachers are working with small groups of students based on assessment data. Some teachers are grouping their students for instruction based on hard and soft data. Coaches are working with classroom teachers to improve the quality of instruction. The local Instructional Superintendent visits the school regularly and conducts walk-throughs with the principal. The school has also implemented the use of Academic Intervention forms to track the interventions used with students by support teachers in order to promote discussions between and among teachers based on the data provided to students.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Nathaniel Woodhull School (PS 35)</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	