



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Early Childhood Center**

**Public School 051**

**87- 45 117 Street  
Queens  
NY11418**

**Principal: Magdaly Saint-Juste**

**Dates of review: May 23 - 24, 2007**

**Reviewer: Stephen Szemerenyi**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Early Childhood School serves 271 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 1. There are two half day classes in pre-kindergarten and five classes each in the other grades, one of which is for gifted and talented students. All students are Title1 eligible, which is more than that in similar and City schools.

The school serves a multicultural community and over 17 different languages are spoken in the home. The school population comprises 52.8% Asian and others students, 29.9% Hispanic students, 10.7% White students and 6.6% Black students. There are 18.9% English language learner students and a very small number of special education students. Student attendance is good at 93%, which is above that of similar schools and the City average.

The principal has only been in post for just under a year. There are no assistant principals in the school's organization to help the principal to discharge her leadership role. The school capacity is 118%, which is significantly higher than that of similar and City schools, and there is pressure on space. The school does not have a gymnasium.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is highly respected by staff, parents and students.
- The principal's dedicated and dynamic leadership has brought about significant change and improvement.
- A wide range of on-site professional development is provided, which is targeted on need and in advance of any new development.
- The impact of the professional development program is systematically monitored and evaluated.
- The school is a very caring community and offers a high level of support to all students.
- Budgeting decisions are creatively made to meet the needs of all students and faculty.
- Teachers' morale is high and they feel that they have a voice in the school and that they are able to contribute to and influence decisions.
- Teachers work and plan effectively in collaboration.
- Students are eager, enthusiastic, well behaved, respectful and fully engaged in the learning process.
- Data is used effectively at all levels in the school to both heighten teachers' understanding of the performance and progress of students and to enable them to tailor their teaching more accurately to meet students' academic needs.

### What the school needs to improve

- Introduce measures to track the progress of students from the point of entry to graduation and to compare improvements in performance with expected outcomes.
- Analyse student attainment by gender as well as ethnicity, class and grade.
- Put a greater emphasis on long-term planning and goal setting and ensure that these are made explicit in the school's documentation.
- Continue the strategies to involve a greater number of parents and caregivers in their children's education.
- Build on the well-established strategies to further raise attendance.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well-developed school.**

The school is very effective in its use of data to develop appropriate plans and set goals to meet the needs of all students. Teachers are well qualified and are encouraged to be reflective about their practice. They are provided with many opportunities to undertake well-focused professional development to increase their confidence and enhance their expertise.

Students engage enthusiastically in the learning process as a direct result of the well targeted instruction. They achieve well and parents are delighted with the school. The building is a joy to behold and the attractive environment is brightened further by the delightful displays of students' work that abound in the corridors and the classrooms. The ambience is highly conducive to learning

The principal's dedicated and knowledgeable approach to school improvement planning has given her the credibility to make difficult and challenging changes. Her interpersonal skills have enabled her to do this in a palatable way, as the staff readily acknowledge. The parents rate the school and the principal highly. The areas for improvement build on the effective work that has already been undertaken.

### 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 uses a wide range of data to gauge the performance of students. Professional development was specifically made available to promote teachers' understanding and confidence and to broaden their expertise. The principal has been astute in evaluating the reliability of different forms of assessment and has supplemented the range by programs designed to provide teachers with the tools to make discerning assessments of students' strengths and weaknesses.

Periodic assessments, teachers' portfolios and running records are regularly and systematically analyzed by the principal, the grade leaders and by teachers working together and individually to check on students' progress. The administration helpfully provides coverage to enable teachers to complete assessments on a more efficient and timely basis. Monitoring by the principal and the leadership team, instituted for the first time this year, shows that the systems are having a positive impact on the performance of all students.

The data is analyzed frequently by ethnicity, class and grade and for special education students and English language learners and leads to differentiated grouping for instruction, where this is deemed appropriate. The school does not currently include gender in its

analysis of different groups and therefore has not taken into account the fact that girls perform better than boys at reading, while boys outperform girls in mathematics.

The principal is highly reflective and is constantly seeking new ways of examining the data to discern patterns and trends and to explore solutions. She does not undertake comparisons with similar schools as no such performance information is readily available and she has to be content with comparisons across the different groups and subjects with, for example, the New York State tests and the school's previous best performances.

**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 sets demanding goals for improvement that emerge from a thorough analysis of needs. Such goals are set by the principal in conjunction with the leadership team, the coaches, groups of teachers and individuals. Both the teachers and the school cabinet emphasize the collaborative nature of the enterprise and stress the value of the introduction of common preparation periods. The school changes tack when the evidence warrants this. The goals in inherited Comprehensive Education Plan have been modified to focus on writing, differentiated learning and guided reading as a result of the new principal's evaluation of the most pressing priorities. The thoroughness with which change has been introduced to ensure that practice is improved is commendable. In the case of writing, the principal and the local instructional superintendent, together with the coaches, visited another school to observe good practice and on their return the principal modeled such practice so that teachers knew what it looked like and could imitate it.

Goals are set for short and long-term improvement for all students, together with timeframes for achieving these goals. Appropriate plans are put in place, though the long-term goals and plans tend to be concerned with the standards expected at the end of grade 1 and what students should know at the point of transfer to junior high school rather than on the progress that they would be expected to make from the point of entry to the time they leave the school.

Particular attention is given to students in greatest need of improvement. When it was noted that English language learners were not performing as well as the general education students, additional support was identified, in the form of an F-Status teacher to work for one day a week in all classes in kindergarten, except the gifted and talented class, and the after school programs were enhanced English language learners in grade 1.

The school communicates its high expectations effectively and involves parents and caregivers closely in children's learning. The parents particularly value the possibility of speaking with the principal about their son or daughter at pick-up time. They feel closely involved and think that the school provides a wealth of communication opportunities. One parent said that the school had tried everything to involve parents in the life of the school. However, some parents remain hard to reach.

**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 modified the mandated curriculum in a number of respects on the basis of data generated to support high expectations and improvement. There is now a stronger emphasis on writing, phonics and guided reading.

Accountability is clearly defined and discussions with teachers ensure that they understand that they are responsible for enabling their students to become effective learners and achieve well. Learning objectives are prominently displayed in classrooms so that students know what they are learning and what they have to do to succeed. Teachers make good use of assessment information to respond very effectively to their students’ different academic and personal needs. As a result, they are actively engaged in the learning process, keep on task and are very enthusiastic about their work. Students have an excellent rapport with all their teachers. The principal knows them all by name and cares passionately about them as individuals.

The principal makes resources available to build capacity related to the school’s goals, priorities and assessed needs. She has used the budget creatively to appoint additional F-status teachers, to provide sharply focused professional development and to establish common preparation periods to facilitate common planning and collaboration. Scheduling decisions reflect the needs that the data has highlighted.

In spite of attendance rates that are already good for such young children, the school has set itself an aspirational target of 95% and intends to introduce further incentives on a class basis for good attendance. The school phones home immediately in response to an absence.

**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 principal seeks to appoint teachers who are comfortable with the gathering and analysis of data, are team players, able to ask questions and to take constructive criticism well and who can establish a good rapport with parents. This ensures that new staff are suitably qualified and willing to support the school’s aims, culture and goals.

There are good opportunities for professional development. One member of staff said that it was great and that she had been developed more in the last year than in the previous five and this view was substantiated by her colleagues. Development is always undertaken in advance of the introduction of any initiative to enable staff to prepare properly and is targeted on improving instruction, broadening teachers’ repertoires and raising student achievement. Such development, which mainly takes place on-site and includes active discussion in teams, as well as input from specialist external consultants, coaches and the principal, has done much to re-invigorate staff and to enhance their collective expertise.

The principal observes teaching formally and informally on a daily basis and provides constructive feedback. She understands the strengths and areas for development of all her teachers very well. Teachers learn from each other and readily share good practice. One of the teachers spoke enthusiastically of the principal trying to make the school 'a wonderful learning place'. The impact of professional development on classroom practice and student improvement is closely evaluated.

The school is very much a family community and gives a warm welcome to students, parents and visitors, and runs very smoothly. The principal is highly respected and provides an excellent role model of best teaching practice, high expectations and caring commitment.

The relationship with Richmond Junior High School has been developed to ensure that the students are properly prepared for the next stage of their development when they leave.

**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 is a reflective community and has very good systems in place at all levels to monitor, evaluate and adjust goals and plans on the basis of regular assessments to accelerate learning and to improve the performance of individuals, classes and grades.

The setting of interim goals and formal monthly checkpoints enable the school to fine tune its plans, to set targets that are increasingly precise and to provide appropriate interventions to meet the needs of individual students.

Resources and high quality professional development are targeted on the identified needs of both students and staff and timely adjustments are made in response to any new information.

Comparisons between and across classes are used to make interim assessments of the effectiveness of programs, teaching and learning, and to measure the progress towards the implementation of plans and goals, but are not yet tightly linked to the assessment of students' achievement when they join the school to determine long-term progress.

Because of the depth of monitoring and evaluation, the school is in a position to make effective use of the analysis of progress towards interim and final goals in order to drive successive plans and to inform the next round of goal setting.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Early Childhood center (PS 51)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<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>			<b>X</b>
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>			<b>X</b>
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>		<b>X</b>	
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.		<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>

\* 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.		<b>X</b>	
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.			<b>X</b>
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<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