



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public School 52

**178-37 146 Terrace
Queens
NY 11434**

Principal: Linda Pough

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Reviewer: Joan L. Johnston

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 52 is located in the Springfield Gardens area of Queens and enrolls 620 students in grades pre-kindergarten through grade 6. Recent statistics for the school indicate that 88% of the students are Black, 8% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 1.5% are White. Approximately 13% are special education students and 5% are English language learners. The school receives Title 1 funding, with 72% of the students eligible. This percentage is close to the average at both similar and City schools. Student attendance, at 90%, is lower than the average of similar and City schools.

This is an Empowerment school. Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school consistently uses data from State assessments, interim assessment reports, and classroom performance to monitor student progress and to make instructional decisions.
- The principal's leadership is transforming the school from one in need of improvement to one that is rapidly improving in many areas.
- There is a strong instructional focus at the school with plans and goal setting targeted to improving student achievement.
- Professional development has been a key element in improving teaching and learning and is embedded within the instructional day.
- There is a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching with frequent monitoring and opportunities for teachers to observe quality instructional practices.
- Technology is well integrated at the classroom level both as a teaching tool and as a vehicle for differentiating instruction to meet individual student needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Involve under represented parents in setting educational and behavioral goals for their children.
- Improve student management programs to better meet the needs of targeted students.
- Continue to monitor and assess the effectiveness of recently introduced initiatives that differentiate student instructional objectives.
- Expand partnerships with cultural institutions and educational organizations to enrich students' learning.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

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

Public School 52 is a school that is quickly moving ahead. Just a few years ago the school, which serves a student population that has many needs, was in need of improvement on many measures. The principal, with a background in business and finance, has embraced the use of data to improve student achievement. Recognizing that professional development for her faculty and staff would be the most effective way to improve instruction, she has integrated training within the school day in a multitude of areas including literacy, mathematics, and technology.

Today there is a strong focus on improving teaching and learning that is backed up with a quality control process. The principal and her assistant principal frequently monitor classrooms to assure that new teaching strategies are in place and that teachers are supported with the resources they need to make the structural changes that have altered traditional classroom practices.

Students who attend the school often come from homes that are in transition. The school is reaching out to involve under represented parents and equipping them with effective parenting skills. The school has established several partnerships focused on improving results and is making efforts to expand partnerships that enrich learning.

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 collects and very effectively uses an exhaustive collection of data reports, which are updated regularly, to understand the progress of each student. In addition to New York State assessment data, the school reviews interim assessment reports such as Princeton Review and Everyday Mathematics unit tests, the Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System, and the Achieve 3000 program reports. The principal rigorously monitors this data which is in a comprehensive spreadsheet format that provides access to individual student progress in each classroom at each grade level.

In addition to this more standardized and summative data collection, within each classroom teachers maintain portfolios which include running records, conference notes, guided reading progress reports and other teacher made assessments. They make good use of these to detect where additional supports are needed or advancement can be recommended.

The principal reports that the separate monitoring of sub groups is not a major focus because the school population reflects little diversity in its ethnic makeup. In place of this, since most students struggle, the school has a system that allows teachers to individualize instruction and monitor results, using technology, on an almost daily basis through the

Achieve 3000 program reports. Teachers pay careful attention to the progress of English language learners and to the identified needs of special education students.

The school benchmarks its performance proficiently with similar schools in the region and, as an Empowerment School, with the identified similar City schools that rank immediately above and below them across a variety of measures. The principal effectively uses State assessment data to evaluate and improve the instructional program. For example, when science and social studies results indicated a need for improvement, students in the upper grades were rescheduled to build in additional time on task for both of these subjects.

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 places a strong emphasis on planning and goal setting using data to make its decisions and is well on the way to its goal of becoming a purpose driven school. The school leadership team annually develops the Comprehensive Education Plan which requires scrutiny of data to pinpoint areas in need of improvement, then teachers plan ways in which they can achieve this goal. For example, when a recent analysis indicated a need to focus on building vocabulary, at grade level planning meetings, teachers collaboratively discussed how to implement an improvement plan and a timeline to meet that goal. As a result, in every classroom, teachers now display and frequently refer to vocabulary charts and word walls, some geared to a specific subject like mathematics, that provide options to enhance word choice.

The principal effectively monitors this goal for the school as a whole by walkthroughs and reviewing student journals to see if vocabulary and word choice have improved sufficiently to increase reading fluency and writing skill development. Protocol sessions with teachers are effectively used and lead to a shared understanding of strategies to achieve a designated goal across a grade level.

The school is focused on the need for all students to achieve at higher levels, particularly those who score at levels 1 and 2 on State assessments. Before school academic intervention services and pull out sessions during the day are targeted to meet the needs of students in greatest need of improvement. For example, at the primary level a Wilson Foundations program strategically focuses on letters, sounds, and decoding skills.

Students have noticed significant changes in the school in recent years and recognize that there are higher expectations for them. Most teachers push them to produce better work and require them to check and revise their work before handing it in. Parent workshops focus on bringing parents into the school and providing them with the skills to reinforce at home what is happening in the classroom.

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.

The school uses the City mandated curriculum, but they have worked with numerous consultants to take it to the next level. For each curricular area they have established interim assessments, rubrics that measure achievement of a standard, or other performance criteria to assure progress. To improve efficiency in obtaining results, teachers are now learning to use technology effectively to input student data on interim literacy assessments.

The principal conveys her high expectations as she closely monitors the progress teachers are making in implementing these curricular and instructional reforms. Effectively differentiating instruction to meet the needs of students is a priority goal. Accountability is a constant focus at the school. Recognizing that teachers need the resources to move from effective to excellent teaching, the principal has efficiently budgeted for materials that have transformed the look of the classrooms into mini libraries with extensive collections of leveled books and bookcases to house them. Mathematics manipulatives, smart boards, laptop computers and other resources facilitate the workshop model of teaching that is part of the focused plan to improve student learning and achievement.

Staffing and scheduling decisions, which face on-going review, are also part of this focused plan. To provide the necessary resources, which are extensive, has meant not adding faculty to reduce class size or expand program. Faculty turn over, particularly at mid year last year, has led to a decision to hire more mature teachers with the life experiences that enable them to work effectively with students who have many needs. The principal has learned how to better schedule the school day to provide the instructional time her students require. Students in most classrooms are actively engaged in their learning.

Parents and students report that most teachers respect their students, but that strategies for dealing with disruptive students in some areas of the school such as the cafeteria, are ineffective. Student attendance continues to be a concern where students’ home circumstances sometimes contribute to a higher than average mobility rate.

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 has a clear idea of the attributes she values in selecting faculty and staff. She selects hard workers with a solid grasp of instruction and technology integration and looks for a passion for teaching and a connection with students. Where new staff are not already data literate, the school provides training in the use of data during induction and faculty meetings.

Teachers have received extensive training over the past few years in both curriculum and instructional strategies. There is are strong partnerships with Columbia University’s Teachers College Reading and Writing Project and with Australian and United States Services in Education to provide in house staff development in mathematics instruction.

The Achieve 3000 on-line assessment tool provides a daily electronic profile of student progress to the principal and classroom teachers. The strong commitment on the part of the principal, in response to data, to upgrade necessary classroom skills to achieve identified goals is a major strength of the school.

Using the Principles of Effectiveness as a guide, the principal frequently observes classroom teaching using focused walkthroughs. Teachers receive written feedback on areas of strength and recommendations for areas in need of improvement. Teachers often observe in other classrooms where there is good practice, for example, where the classroom environment is well defined.

Teacher teams regularly meet as a study group for protocol sessions to examine student work. This strategy is working to set shared standards for assessing student work and to build the capacity and skills of teachers across a grade level.

The principal has made major changes over the past four years that are accelerating progress and enabling the school to move forward. Parents, students, and teachers respect the principal for her commitment to implementing these challenging reforms although parental cooperation on expectations remains an on-going goal.

The school runs smoothly, but requires constant vigilance. The guidance office and pupil personnel committee continue to develop techniques and strategies for working with challenging students. The school has developed a number of partnerships and is open to exploring others that could further expand opportunities for 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 effectively monitors annual improvement goals that are identified in the Comprehensive Education Plan. The school leadership team meets regularly to review progress against these goals. Student achievement is consistently monitored and all assessment data is regularly tracked and reviewed. This information is used to make diagnostic decisions about student progress. The principal frequently checks for evidence that adjustments have been made through examination of writing folders, classroom visits, and other forms of monitoring. A weekly newsletter also focuses attention on improving results and accelerating progress.

The school is moving into a continuous improvement cycle as it moves from developing annual goals to tracking interim goals that evaluate progress along the way. Teachers now regularly meet with their peers at the grade level above and below their own to build in vertical as well as horizontal goals at each grade level. The on line assessment tool provides instant feedback on students' instructional level. Most faculty members support the major changes that have taken place in recent years and are beginning to see the results of their efforts in improved student learning.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 52 (PS 52)	∅	✓	+
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	