



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Harry Eichler School

Public School 056

**86-10 114th Street
Queens
NY 11418**

Principal: Ann Leiter

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Reviewer: Peter Williman

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Harry Eichler School is a small elementary school serving 449 students from grade 2 through 5. The student population represents 44.5% Asian and other students, 37.6% Hispanic students, 10.2% White students and 7.7% Black students. Five percent are special education students and 15.1% are English language learners. Attendance at an average of 94.9% is well above that of City and similar schools. The school received Title 1 funding for 65.4% of students by the 2005 Report Card.

The school became an empowered school in 2006. As an Empowerment School, The Harry Eichler School has more flexibility to make key decisions and control 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.

The school has no library and restricted physical education facilities. Two classes are in temporary transportable accommodation in the schoolyard. Almost all classrooms are equipped with 'Smartboard' technology for instruction.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a highly motivated leader who uses her high expectations and commitment to benefit the welfare and achievement of her students to drive her school development decisions.
- The school collects a comprehensive range of data and uses it very effectively to understand the progress of students.
- Members of the administration, the cabinet and the pupil personnel team carry out their individual and collective responsibilities to a high standard.
- Grade teams use data very effectively from State and school generated tests, rubrics and their own records to inform the next steps in learning and accelerate student progress.
- Students enjoy school and are very effectively engaged in their lessons.
- The school carefully selects new programs, projects and strategies that promotes achievement of its instructional goals and adds breadth to the curriculum, which for older high achieving students is of outstanding quality.
- Teachers know their students well and use a range of strategies to individualize learning, to encourage collaborative learning and to raise student awareness of their next steps.
- Formal and informal professional development is well tailored to meet the needs of individual teachers and of school development plans.
- The school uses data and resources very effectively to make high quality provision for English language learners and special education students.
- The school is a caring community, which, by its open communication with parents, the support it gives to family welfare and promotion of understanding of the learning processes, promotes a strong commitment and loyalty.

What the school needs to improve

- Set the current good uses of data within a context of proactively identified achievable, objectively measurable targets for students, classes, grades to enable more specific evaluation of school, subject and student progress.
- Specify the goals, timeframes and monitoring within the Comprehensive Education Plan with greater clarity to facilitate easier and accessible review and to plan revision.
- Analyze progress data by ethnic, gender and other groupings of specific interest to the school.
- Share best practice further to develop the consistency in class, grade and across school record keeping and use of technology to inform instruction.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

Not many higher achieving grade 5 students in elementary schools demonstrate their confidence and independence as well as Harry Eichler School students. They research the internet conferences with National Aeronautics Space Administration (NASA), universities and schools globally, construct websites to communicate their projects and then use podcasts to enter competitions because of the quality of planning and instruction that focuses on accelerating learning for all students individually. Teachers' knowledge of students' next steps in learning is based upon good use of data. As a result, instruction is specifically differentiated and technology applied to enable teachers to cater very well for the needs of students across the range of achievement. Consequently students' attain well in assessments.

This newly 'empowered' school builds its success very well year-to-year. However, it does not always link its goals sufficiently with clearly defined targets at student, class, grade and school level to measure its successes objectively and achieve further consistency across the work of the 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 well-developed.

The school uses a comprehensive range of data very well to understand the progress of each student. As a result, whenever possible, all students are well placed in homogeneous classes to meet their needs. Students' progress is carefully monitored through State and City tests, combined with school generated periodic tests, program assessments and faculty observations. The school's specialist provision for higher achieving students in ASTRE or gifted student classes services students within and beyond the community. These classes enable students to achieve outcomes of very high quality through accelerated learning, especially using technology and, as a result, students' research and communicate their projects dramatically. The assessment system is used well to track the progress of English language learners and special education students. The perspectives of the relative progress of ethnic groups, students by gender and other groups are not sufficiently researched.

The very good overview of individual student's progress undertaken by the principal is complemented by the generally good use of technology to access the Princeton Review data at several levels, together with conference records maintained by faculty. Best practice in recording and analyzing student data is shared freely by faculty but this is often an incidental process and as a result there are inconsistencies in quality. However, the principal, cabinet and faculty use data well to compare the relative performance of students and classes and implicitly the higher achiever groupings. A graphic record of students who have made more than, less than or the equivalent of a year's progress is a

remarkably sharp tool to illustrate comparisons. Progress across and within subjects is equally effectively kept under review. The network of empowered schools is not sufficiently formed to make cross-school comparisons but the school is making appropriate contacts and approaches.

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 principal’s stated priority is to ensure that teachers use data effectively to meet each individual student’s next learning step. As a result of this clear goal, teachers and grade teams review their day-to-day information and test data very carefully to plan follow on work or to re-teach or reinforce a specific learning difficulty in class or in after school programs. State tests at grade 3 and the accumulative Princeton Reviews enable teachers to address individual items within the English language arts and mathematics programs that students may be having difficulty understanding. Consequently, planning for individual, groups and classes is specific and well focused to meet all students’ needs in skills and understanding. English language learners and lower achieving students at benefit equally from this detailed planning and so make the same good progress as their classmates.

Overarching goals for the school are formally and most explicitly expressed through the principal’s goals and objectives. In this document, goals, objectives and strategies include measurable outcomes that are well defined. The Comprehensive Education Plan is less well developed. Although it is structured in terms of planning, it lacks precision in determining timeframes, interim indicators to assist the monitoring of the plan’s progress and clearly measurable expected outcomes.

The school conveys and raises high expectations by engaging students progressively in self-awareness of their learning and through increasing their personal responsibility for that learning. The ASTRE classes are an exemplification of this in that by grade 5 students are confident in managing, researching, demonstrating and explaining projects of high quality. For example, illustrating and contrasting life and traditions in a Balkan state, India and the United States and producing a project report. Although practice is not wholly consistent, teachers use a range of strategies very effectively to raise student motivation to work to the next level. These include rubrics, student access to Princeton Review and other self development programs, samples of good quality checked work and students own monitoring of what they do well and their next steps. As a result, there is mutuality in the work of teachers and students in improving learning. Parents are well informed of the school’s work and intentions for their children and value the opportunities for involvement. Consequently this is a school in which all parties are well-coordinated and committed to the goal of individual improvement and success.

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's high quality development of curriculum, alignment of support before and after school and effective use of resources enable students to be enthusiastic, on task and successful in their achievement. Teachers adhere to curriculum maps and this ensures that the mandated curriculum is effectively in place. Curriculum pacing calendars together with the integral assessments in the mathematics program inform faculty and administration of overall progress. Well-maintained portfolios of work match and reflect the success of English language arts themes appropriately. Technology is well integrated into the curriculum and teaching to enrich instruction and broaden learning in 'state of the art' processes. For example, students compete as Wall Street Traders and jealously guard the success of their portfolios. The use of computers and the internet are effectively used to compensate for the school's lack of a library, through lack of space.

The multiplicity of assessments and the close scrutiny of teaching and learning, especially in English language arts and mathematics, ensure teachers are in line with school improvement objectives. Differentiation is efficiently implemented through homogeneous classes in each grade. Within this structure teachers use data and the workshop model methodology very well to identify individuals and focus groups for instruction and to enable students to work independently. In some classes insufficient attention is paid to levels, challenge and outcomes in independent learning.

The school uses available information well to drive budgetary and logistical decisions. Grade planning is well supported through common preparation time. Funding of the after school 'Keep up Math' program ensures no time delays in reinforcing insecure skills from the day's learning for identified students. Rotation of teachers through the homogeneous grade classes integrates knowledge for planning and sharpens teachers' expectations. The before school program is very effectively used to ensure students are well prepared for the day's lessons.

Relationships between staff and students are very positive. Students value the personal support they receive and feel secure that any issues they may have will be addressed effectively. While students' enthusiasm for school underpins the good attendance, which is significantly above that of City and similar schools, the school is not complacent and has good protocols to maintain momentum for improvement.

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's high expectations are demonstrated well by the effective development of instructional capacity within the school. Over half of the teachers have joined the school in the past eight years. The continuity of the school's rising achievement and the good level of implementation of the school's goal to monitor and respond to individual student progress demonstrate a hiring strategy that is very effective. Cabinet members are well trained to be able to understand and support the use of data at leadership, team and faculty levels. Teachers are well trained to use the range of Princeton Review analysis and to support students to access both information and appropriate corrective programs. Some staff have exemplary knowledge and skills in these respects. Teachers reflect positively on the benefits of their personal professional development. They apply their

training in the workshop model effectively and use the detail of conferencing skills and 'accountable talk' for students to strengthen observation and student understanding.

The principal is respected highly for her professional knowledge, a strong commitment to her students, her relentless hard work and above all for the positive impact of these attributes. She knows each student and member of staff well and consequently is able to give constructive support. For teachers this is epitomized in good quality perceptive formal and informal reviews. For students and parents, they know she will act supportively and appropriately. Teachers themselves support each other well and there is some co-teaching and appropriate teacher-on-teacher observation to match school aims.

Good communication within and across teams secures effective planning based upon the continuum of test and class data. The principal maintains direct contact with classes through visits and the sampling of work. Together with the cabinet, she reviews progress by subject, class and individual student and this effectively supports the work of the coaches. Teachers work within their grade teams well and as a result share and compare next steps for learning.

Clear systems, communication and protocols cement the goodwill and enthusiasm of faculty, staff, students and parents. Consequently the school runs very smoothly. Links with the network of empowered schools are evolving. However, the school has strong partnerships for staff and students alike through its global internet connections.

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.

Strategic planning as expressed through the Comprehensive Education Plan is insufficiently developed to have clearly defined interim goals and specific links to the schedule of assessments to monitor progress. The principal's goals and objectives document is a more usable document that is shared with the cabinet and faculty. The school does as a result monitor its progress towards these goals although not in a structured and timetabled way and this is an aspect for improvement.

The cabinet compares student progress within and across classes at the Princeton Review periods and subsequent guidance is given to grade teams and faculty to adjust plans and priorities appropriately. Inter-school comparisons are not practical as little data is genuinely available of similar schools apart from annually published scores. The school revises longer term planning in response to its available data for example in adjusting school provision and priorities flexibly for each grade as they move through the school.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Harry Eichler School PS 056	∅	✓	+
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	