



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**The School of Heroes
Public School 058**

**72-24 Grand Avenue
Queens
NY 11378**

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Reviewer: Alan Geller

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The School of Heroes, Public School 58, is an elementary school with 913 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population is comprised of 36% White, 33% Asian, 29% Hispanic and 2% Black. There are 130 (14%) special education students who are serviced in either self-contained or collaborative team teaching classes. There are 132 English language learners, also 14%, who receive a push-in model of instruction with Spanish and Chinese the two main languages. The school's attendance is on an upward trend and has reached 95% which is above similar and City schools. The school does not receive Title 1 funding because only 50% of pupils are eligible.

The school was named after the uniformed heroes who worked in Maspeth and lost their lives on September 11, 2001. The school is recognized as a City-wide model for developing the school enrichment model in which students develop their critical thinking skills while creating hands on projects in areas of special interest.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a focused leader who is well-respected by the staff, students and parents and who has created a positive learning environment.
- Data is used well to track the progress of students, to inform the instructional programs and as a means of increasing student outcomes.
- Students enjoy participating in school activities, which is reflected in their good attendance.
- A spirit of collaboration exists within school-wide meetings that encourage the sharing of good practices.
- School procedures and routines are well developed, resulting in a safe school that runs very well.
- Enrichment programs are a strong focus of the school as students are involved in developing their critical thinking skills in hands-on activities based upon their specific interests.
- The parents are very pleased with the positive school environment and actively participate in school activities.
- The students feel well respected by their teachers and are actively engaged by the instructional programs.
- Student work samples are celebrated throughout the entire school creating a positive impact on student self-esteem.
- The teachers have high expectations for their students, which is evidenced in their commitment towards student successful achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to improve the consistent tracking of data in writing and give feedback to students to help them improve.
- Further develop youth development activities and partnerships that help the school reach its goals.
- Disaggregate and compare data of students in ethnic groups to track progress, to note any emerging trends and patterns in performance and to identify ongoing support needs.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The review agrees with the school that it is well-developed in nearly all aspects. The principal has implemented a vision that has created a school with high expectations for students. The organizational structure facilitates collaboration where all members of staff are most willing to share best practices. The principal and her administration team support the staff well and involve them in planning and goal-setting activities. As a result of this work, the school has a positive learning environment that is appreciated by the students and the parents. The school is recognized within the City as a model for its school-wide enrichment program that allows students to pursue their interests and teachers to facilitate the learning process. The faculty is committed to raising the achievement levels of their students, resulting in engaging classrooms and a positive school tone. Student achievement is valued and celebrated although they could be more involved in assessing their own work. Work is displayed throughout the school, creating a sense of pride and students who strive to do their best.

The school is focused on collecting data for each student, classroom and grade. It tracks students' progress to make informed decisions about academic programs although this is not yet consistent enough in some aspects. Students in greatest need are supported by academic intervention teachers who provide students with small group instruction that utilizes specific learning materials. Teachers meet regularly in grade level planning sessions with school leaders and coaches to analyze the data and revise and improve the curriculum as necessary. Professional development engages teachers in developing the units of study in different subject areas which impacts positively upon student learning. Teachers observe each other and engage in self- and peer-evaluation activities thereby improving their teaching skills and strategies. Some partnerships exist that support the school's work but more could be done to extend the number and range.

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.

The school gathers and analyzes a wide and varied range of data to make informed decisions about developing the curriculum. Data is recorded on specific charts to detail the performance and progress of each student, class and grade and facilitates the sharing of information with the faculty. School-generated data is gathered in reading, mathematics and writing. Teachers keep records of reading conferences that occur with individual students to determine strengths and areas for improvement. The writing program uses one-on-one conferences to chart student progress but tracking is not as consistent in this area since the mastery of skills is not clearly evidenced. School data gives a clear-cut picture of the performance and progress of each student, class and grade and next learning steps are reviewed at grade meetings and individually with the principal.

Data is further used to identify students who need additional support from academic intervention teachers, including special education students whose progress is carefully monitored. The data concerning English language learners is well maintained and students receive additional support based upon their skills' analysis. The school has started to look at the performance and progress of different ethnic groupings but analysis of the data in this area is still developing. Some students receive enrichment support, which is a major thrust of the school program. Specific work packages are prepared by the coach for identified students or classes to further improve their performance.

The school is actively involved in comparing itself to other schools within the region and its network. Past performance of students is tracked to note progress of individual students, classes and grades. The school uses data to monitor performance in academic subjects. The data is analyzed as a means of further evaluating programs and school strategies.

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 establishes the school goals and benchmarks for each subject, class and grade in consultation with the cabinet and grade leaders. The goals are further enhanced by linking their successful implementation to students' expected learning outcomes. Goals are shared with the staff that create the action plans so that expected outcomes are measurable and have clear timescales for completion. Teachers know precisely how much students must improve because they are all involved in developing the plans. The teachers are very knowledgeable of their students' academic needs and are committed to ensuring that the goals are achieved in all subject areas. As a result, everyone's efforts are always focused on improving programs and accelerating the progress of all students.

Students who have difficulty in developing skills and who need the most support are monitored closely. All referrals to the academic intervention team results in a specific improvement plan for each student. The team meets weekly and works closely with the classroom teachers to compare student progress, evaluate the success of strategies and adjust goals accordingly. Identified students receive daily push-in instructional support and take part in the extended day program in order to accelerate their progress.

High expectations are shared with the parents and students. Time is taken to share successful programs with parents, such as the school-wide enrichment model, so they can share with the school how well their children are doing. Students enjoy the programs and value the efforts to support their learning and, as a result, they work hard to achieve.

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 uses the mandated curriculum in English language arts and mathematics and specific supplementary materials and programs that provide good, relevant data. For

example, the mathematics curriculum has specific built in unit tests and individual tracking sheets that allows each teacher to monitor individual student and class progress. The balanced literacy program uses the workshop model. This enables teachers to hold one-on-one conferences with students to note their strengths and challenges, to track individual and class progress and use the information to focus follow-up lessons. Additionally students' reading levels and progress are charted regularly. Conferencing is used to note performance in the writing. The principal is aware of the inconsistent practice in this aspect and is focusing on improving the way progress is recorded and monitored and feedback given to students to involve them more in self-assessment. The staff is involved in developing teaching points as a means to developing units of study, which serves to enhance the curriculum. The school-wide enrichment model develops students' critical thinking skills while engaging them in hands-on projects in an area of special interest to them. This impacts on students positively who want to learn more about a subject area and enables them to work with a staff member who is uniquely qualified in the subject.

Teachers use the generated data well to differentiate instruction effectively for all students. Students receive instruction in flexible groupings using specific resource materials that are matched well to their ability and achievement levels. The school's leadership monitors this through midyear reviews with the teachers, walkthroughs and by observing groups in guided reading or mathematics lessons. The school leadership meets regularly with the faculty to share their successes and to reflect on improving their challenges.

Budgeting, scheduling and staffing decisions are effective and aligned to meet the needs of students. For example, in order to maximize the ratio of teachers to students, additional staff was placed in grades to maintain small class size. Also, additional academic intervention teachers were hired to work with small groups of students in reading and mathematics, and for English language learners. A collaborative team teaching model provides additional academic support for special education students. These have been effective in developing an upward trend on State tests for the school.

Instructional programs are directed by a committed staff and are a mix of fun and hard work which supports students' active engagement very effectively. For example, students were highly engaged in problem solving activities as a part of a mathematics Olympics that served to motivate them to achieve in an enjoyable way. Students are well-respected by their teachers who speak to them in a positive manner and urging them to achieve at a high level. Students react well to this positive treatment. This results in students who trust the staff and work hard. Due to the nurturing environment of the school that is well accepted by students and their families, and rigorous procedures for following up all absences, attendance is good.

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 is well respected by the school family. She is the driving force that keeps everyone focused on reaching the school goals. The well-developed and consistently followed procedures ensure the school runs very smoothly and that students are safe.

The school employs specific criteria when selecting staff to determine if teachers are committed to student learning and are willing to work in a collegial atmosphere. Teachers must plan a lesson at the school and give two demonstration lessons during the selection

process. As a result, new staff are enabled to contribute to the development of the positive tone of the building and in helping students to score higher on State tests.

There is a rigorous and established professional development calendar for each semester. The school offers a menu of activities and teachers are expected to attend the sessions that they need based upon personal specific needs and those of their students. The staff uses a regional rubric to assess themselves in literacy and mathematics and to engage in self- and peer-evaluation activities. This enables them to grade their effectiveness, and to create opportunities to plan units of study that are of special interest to the students.

To judge the effectiveness of school activities, the school leaders visit classes often and attend grade and academic intervention meetings to evaluate progress. Follow-up, written reports are received by the teachers noting, in a positive manner, suggestions for improvement. For example, the principal will often recommend that teachers visit each others' classes or receive additional support from a coach. The principal is well aware of the strengths of the staff. Student performance data is used effectively to judge the quality of teaching and the value and impact of the professional development program. At this time, the school has some partnerships that help it reach its curriculum goals. There is scope for further improvement especially in developing closer links with academic support agency staff from outside school.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built 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 Comprehensive Educational Plan is constantly being evaluated to measure the achievement of interim and long-term goals, and the effectiveness of school plans. Grade leaders and the coaches meet regularly to review the effectiveness of guided reading plans against students' attainment of reading goals. They then share with the teachers the next steps, which aid teacher planning and goal-setting based upon student performance. The cabinet plans and evaluates results and involves the staff in revising plans that will help students to reach the school goals.

The school quickly attends to the analysis of data to make school improvements. Progress of individuals is compared within each classroom and grade at grade level planning meetings. The focus is to determine how effective plans are meeting the needs of all students. All information is shared with the cabinet so the school's leadership can determine whether to revise action plans and programs, and to adjust goals based upon the individual student, class and/or grade progress. The principal meets with each grade to analyze the progress of classes as a means to ensure that the plans are working and are being successful. Individual teachers are responsible for assessing their students' progress and for planning, evaluating and revising strategies according to the need. This is working well in reading and mathematics but is less consistent for writing.

The culture of the school is based upon accepting and expecting change. Structures are in place that facilitate planning whereby new plans are implemented based on how well they support existing ones. School events and training are often connected to the changes and serves to motivate students and staff to achieve the goals. Teachers are engaged in an ongoing process of improving the curriculum units in all subject areas as a means of raising achievement levels of each student, class and grade.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The School of Heroes (PS 58)	∅	✓	+
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