



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public School 086

**87- 41 Parsons Boulevard
Queens
NY 11432**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 86 is an elementary school that shares a campus with a high school and houses a hospital clinic through Queens Hospital. The school has 1015 students and is often oversubscribed. It is the only school in the district, region and city with students from grades 3 through 6. Forty five percent of the students are Hispanic, 35% Asian, 19% Black and the remainder White.

Sixteen percent are English language learners, and 8% of students are enrolled in special education. This number is growing as the school has recently created three new special education classes. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding. The school attendance rate, at around 94%, is consistently better than that of City and similar schools.

Although there is a good percentage of staff who have been in the school for more than two years, the absence rate of teachers is higher than average and the late arrival into school of some faculty members is also identified as a problem.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The new principal gives strong leadership to the school and is very well respected by the whole school community.
- The administration has a good understanding of the school's strengths and is continually seeking to improve learning.
- The school successfully meets the diverse needs of its students, in particular those with the greatest barriers to learning, and those whose first language is not English.
- The principal and assistant principals have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of instruction throughout the school and have high expectations for the continual development of teachers' skills.
- Students enjoy coming to school, have good attendance records, arrive punctually, and feel safe and secure.
- There are effective teams throughout the school, whose collaboration is characterized by openness and a willingness to share and develop new ideas in the search for improvement.
- Partnerships with outside bodies are used effectively, and contribute significantly to the enrichment of students' learning and their daily lives.
- Students' work is celebrated in displays around the school, and shows the school's commitment to a wider and more creative curriculum.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend teachers' skills in differentiating instruction, based upon both the group and individual needs of students.
- Give clearer direction to students about their learning goals, so that they understand how to improve their work.
- Use the school budget more effectively to fund identified needs in learning resources and the continuing and regular professional development of staff.
- Ensure that all teachers can create, interpret and use data in their planning for students' progress and learning.
- Explore new initiatives in encouraging parents to take an active role in partnership with the school so that they are more aware of the learning needs of their children.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The school provides a lively, happy and caring environment for its students. The new principal has made a significant impact on the whole school community since her arrival a year ago. She has quickly established an effective leadership team, and is ably assisted by her assistant principals in guiding the school towards improvement in all areas.

The school has considerable strengths in the way it provides for the many needs of its diverse community, realizing that many students have barriers to learning. Teachers are skilled in identifying how these students can be helped in their academic and social development and create many opportunities for enrichment in learning, in addition to the mandated curriculum.

The administration is now accurately identifying the main issues for school improvement and taking vigorous action in order to achieve its learning goals. These include the need for all staff to improve their understanding of how to use data in their planning for the needs of students. The school is also becoming much more ambitious and creative in dealing with seemingly unsolvable problems, such as a lack of parental support and shortfalls in the budget. The school has a proven record, especially in the last year, of successfully overcoming many problems. This, together with the cooperation of all staff, and the ambition of its leaders, suggests that the school has a good capacity for continued improvement.

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 generates considerable data through a wide variety of tests and assessments. As a result, teachers have a solid base of information which they can use to give them a clear picture of the performance and progress of their students. The principal is forthright in her determination that all staff will use data effectively for the benefit of the learning and well being of the students. The assistant principals and other members of the leadership team have a good understanding of what the data gathered is telling them about the progress of the wide diversity of ethnic groups, English language learners and special education students in the school. They are guiding and supporting all teachers on a regular and constant basis, having recognized that not all teachers find it easy to use data effectively. Their main strength is a consistency in the use of conferencing to gain a picture of how students are progressing, as for example when checking understanding in reading. The school is now using data more purposefully and accurately in analyzing why similar ability students, with the same learning opportunities progress at widely differing

rates. The administration is also now using data to track the achievement of students from different ethnicities. They found, for example that there was a difference of 24% in the achievement of two different ethnic groups, at levels 3 and above in the City mathematics tests in 2005. The school also recognized through its data analysis that certain grades, for example grade 4, performed better than others in mathematics in 2005, and that results in science in the school were not as good as in English language arts and mathematics. Gathering and using data is rapidly becoming more effective and its continued development is becoming well embedded in the school's focused plan.

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 undeveloped

The school has recognized that this is an area requiring attention and development. Collaborative planning through grade and extended cabinet meetings is beginning to identify achievable long term goals, and a framework to meet these is taking shape. At present, various initiatives such as the development of students' reading skills, based upon available and increasing data are in the early stages of implementation. Teachers have a good amount of data about their students' progress but not all are planning effectively to meet individual needs and setting realistic timeframes for achieving identified goals. The school is better at identifying the lower achieving students and setting goals for their improvement, than higher achieving students who are capable of making faster progress.

The principal and administrators have high expectations which are made clear to all staff, students and parents. However the school faces considerable difficulties in sharing these expectations and exchanging information with many parents. The school constantly encourages parents to attend workshops or information evenings and offers them regular opportunities to discuss the progress and personal development of their children. Many parents, for a wide number of reasons, remain very reticent about being in direct contact with the school and, as a result, do not share the school's ambitions for their children. Extended absences mean that some students do not receive the benefit of continuous education. A new parent coordinator has been appointed recently, with a specific mandate to develop strategies to encourage greater parental cooperation and involvement in school life.

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 is working hard to extend the opportunities within the curriculum to collect more specific data about the widely varying needs of its students so that it can support and accelerate their learning more effectively. However the collection and use of data is inconsistent. Some teachers, for example those instructing special education students, are able to create finely tuned assessment data which they apply accurately in their

planning for the students' learning needs. Regular administrative 'walk-throughs' and formal observations have revealed that some teachers have not yet reached a full understanding of the need to differentiate their planning and instruction in order to improve the learning of all their students. Consequently, for some students the work is too easy and they are not sufficiently challenged, and this hinders their progress. This also impacts upon student engagement in some lessons. Cabinet and grade meetings constantly stress the need to use data to improve student outcomes.

Teachers have a good knowledge of the personal needs of their students, are caring and use the 'Operation Respect' program to encourage self respect, self esteem and respect for others. Students are confident in their trust of staff, and there are good relationships throughout the school.

The school is getting better at identifying where their budget needs are, as, for example, in technology, science and reading resources. However, there is still insufficient flexibility in budget decision making, and identified needs are sometimes not provided quickly enough. Scheduling and staffing decisions show flexibility and are driven by student data.

The school has been very successful in encouraging high attendance and good punctuality by students and takes swift and decisive action when problems occur. The school, though, has not yet solved the problem of the students who go abroad to their native country for long periods of time, they do not speak English and lose some of what they have learned, and many miss the standardized tests. The data proves conclusively that the learning and progress of these students deteriorates significantly as a result.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient

The school has an effective administration, very well led by the principal, which has a strong commitment to using data to improve students' performance and progress. Teachers and support staff are selected carefully to ensure that they share the high expectations for student achievement. In spite of the considerable barriers to the learning of some students, leaders rarely fail to maintain high expectations for the progress of all in the school. This is exemplified especially by the frequent observation of classroom teaching by the principal and assistant principals. Their evaluation of the quality of instruction is well founded, and they ensure that teachers understand how they can improve their instruction. This is helped by frequent modeling of good practice in lessons by coaches. The school then plans opportunities for further professional development in order to align the needs of the school to the needs and skills of the teachers especially in using data to set goals. Following a recent grant for improvement in technology resources for example, the administration has already planned a program of professional development led by volunteers on the teaching staff.

Extended cabinet and grade teams are regularly involved in evaluating how successful they are in their planning and how they might improve. The well respected principal is at the forefront in driving forward the need for improvement in instruction and the use of data. This management of change has not always been comfortable, but there is good evidence that she is taking nearly all staff with her in collaboration and partnership. In spite of difficulties within the building, for example the lack of a substantial playground, resulting in

students sitting daily for forty five minutes in cramped conditions in the cafeteria/gym, the school runs smoothly, and procedures are understood by all. There are good quality links with many outside bodies, such as Project Arts, and Operation Respect, which contribute positively towards achieving the schools' academic goals.

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 uses a considerable number of strategies in order to evaluate the progress of each student during the year. These include checklists for classroom environment, examination of teacher assessment data, and frequent interventions with staff by the principal, assistant principals, and coaches. This reinforces staff understanding of school plans and interim goals for the continued improvement in the learning of all students. In these ways, leaders are gaining a continual flow of information about their progress in improving teachers' plans and classroom practice. Teachers are in no doubt that the school holds all of them accountable for the progress of their students.

Although grading rubrics are often displayed in classrooms, some students do not fully understand what they mean. They sometimes only have a vague idea of their own personal targets for improvement. Verbal feedback to students, which teachers do well, is more effective than written comments, which often do not help students to know how to improve. Due mainly to the vigilance of leaders and their good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of learning in the school, the administration is becoming much more proficient in reacting to what data is telling them. In addition, openness and team participation in decision making is enabling the school to revise effectively both the interim and final goals contained within the Comprehensive Education Plan.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

PUBLIC SCHOOL 86 (PS 086)	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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	