



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Harry T Stewart, Sr. School**

**PS 92Q**

**99- 01 34 Avenue**

**Queens**

**NY 11368**

**Principal: Dr. Mary Dono**

**Dates of review: April 26 – 27, 2007**

**Reviewer: Andy McClean**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The school is located in Corona in the borough of Queens. It serves students of grades pre kindergarten through 5. There are 794 students enrolled at present with nearly 50% English language learners and 12% special education students. Less than 2% of students are White, 10% Black, 87% Hispanic and 2% Asian/Pacific Islander. 12% of students are eligible for Title 1 funding. Attendance is 95%, which is above the average of both City and similar schools. The whole school environment is bright, colorful and very well maintained, with an atmosphere that welcomes all-comers, particularly parents. The building itself is a very child-friendly one, where all students, particularly those with challenges to their movement around school, are very well accommodated. The main languages spoken in school are Spanish and English.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school is led by a very knowledgeable and visionary principal who is ably supported by senior staff.
- The learning environment is safe and stimulating and ensures that all students are fully included in the work of the school.
- The teachers are keen, enthusiastic and willing to discuss challenges and learn from each other.
- Parents are actively encouraged to become involved in supporting their children's learning.
- The school's celebration of students' work on colorful displays, and in print rich classrooms shows students how much their work is appreciated.
- The teachers and all the support staff show mutual respect for one another and this provides positive role models for the students.
- High quality professional development for teachers focuses successfully upon the main school goals in literacy and mathematics.
- The school makes outstanding use of data, particularly school generated data, to determine the next steps in learning for all groups of students so that progress can be successfully tracked and adjusted.
- Teachers' productive focus upon improving student learning by providing engaging instruction, which is well supported by technology.
- The school's leadership has created an invaluable team spirit among the staff that encourages them to be constructive critical while at the same time they are highly supportive of the direction the school is taking.

### What the school needs to improve

- Dissemination to all classes of the best instructional practice throughout the school in order to consolidate higher standards of learning.
- Use the school's high quality data and tracking systems to provide greater challenge to the school's most able students.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

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

The school provides a stimulating and safe environment, where staff strive hard to meet the school's overall goal of realizing the true potential of all its students. The school is at the heart of the local community and gets great support from the parents. Every effort is made to remove barriers to learning, with the school's concentration on bilingual education. The leadership of the school, by a knowledgeable, accessible and enthusiastic principal, is clearly focused on the development of school programs. Everyone makes highly effective use of all available data to identify student strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are well aware of the need to improve student achievement and demonstrate a team spirit that results in a very reflective dialogue about how they can all contribute to making the children's schooling more rewarding academically and more enjoyable.

The school's priorities include a focus on improving the learning of the English language learners, a task which is already well under way, and providing greater challenge for the gifted and talented students.

The professional development programs for teachers are well structured and geared towards the school's primary goals, with an effective concentration upon improving standards of reading, writing and math. There is an awareness of the need to spread the best instructional practice seen in school, to all classes. Teachers, parents and all staff members work diligently to improving their children's life chances through focused use of all available data resulting in a challenging but very enjoyable, school experience.

Students demonstrate respect and trust in the principal and teachers. The concentration in school upon basic skills of literacy and math is well founded in data analysis. However, teachers also do their utmost to develop the talents of as many students as possible through art, poetry, music, dance and drama.

The principal's determination to identify and realize the potential of all children is seen in all aspects of school life, with great emphasis upon regular and prompt school attendance. This, together with the enthusiastic commitment of a dedicated team of very reflective teachers, shows a capacity to continue the trend of raised student achievement.

### **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 test data and its own school generated statistics very successfully to determine instructional focus for its students. Each student's progress is regularly monitored and instructional programs modified to improve achievement. Reading records are updated almost daily resulting in students, parents and teachers measuring progress, or lack of it quickly, and adjusting instruction accordingly.

School goals are based solidly upon the interpretation of the current data and arise from a review of what grades, classes and individuals have achieved in the recent past. There is a particular emphasis on the achievement of those students identified as being at risk of not being promoted. The school's leadership team use data all the time to determine their next steps and to measure the impact of their work.

Performance data is refined by good use of technology to identify the differences in performance of ethnic groups, English language learners and special education students. As a result of this filtering process, teachers in these areas have a good understanding of the particular needs of each student, particularly reading levels. Good use of this data is made when conferencing with parents, as well as individual students, to identify the next steps to be made to improve learning.

The school uses its own data regularly to scrutinize its performance against that of similar schools and look for areas of improvement, based on those comparisons.

**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, in conjunction with the administration, has used test data to outline to everyone, teachers, parents and students, the school's major areas for development. Its primary goal is to identify and realize the full potential of all its students. The school is particularly well developed in setting realistic and challenging targets for at risk groups such as those who are new to the school and in particular those who are also new to the country. Regular meetings are held to measure the impact of support, after which any adjustment in support programs is then made to ensure students receive the most focused attention for their needs.

Data is also used effectively to monitor students' social and emotional welfare. Contacts with parents are very well established through diligent work by the school's parent coordinator. This results in all parties having a clear understanding of a student's next learning steps. The school's realization that all students, particularly English language learners, need extra instruction in reading skills has resulted in goals to improve these. This work is evident throughout the school, and has resulted in higher achievement.

Coaches and Grade leaders meet with their colleagues on regular formal and informal, basis to use available and recent data to re-adjust instructional programs. A particular goal, deduced from analysis of test data for English language learners, has resulted in specific intervention programs, as well as bilingual instruction. These are regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure that good progress has taken place. Where student progress is unsatisfactory, individual teachers are expected to take responsibility for specific changes to instruction to rectify matters. Support from colleagues to assist in such changes is a very well developed feature of everyday school life and reflects the school's high expectations for all its students.

Good communications enable the school to inform parents of goals for specific aspects of the curriculum, particularly how they can assist their children with their reading and homework tasks.

**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 concentrates successfully upon ensuring the best possible provision of a wide and stimulating curriculum. The school’s overall aim is to provide its students with the necessary literacy and math skills to address challenges in their lives. All class teachers help to improve students’ reading and writing skills by publishing as many pieces of student writing as possible in regular poetry and prose booklets. This work is also seen displays around the school. As a result, there is a great deal of pride among students at the recognition of their efforts and imagination. Instruction is successfully aligned to produce writing of a high standard not just within English language arts, but also in as many subjects as possible. This is an expectation that the principal makes sure all teachers understand. Resources and instruction to engage all students in their own learning is a particular focus with the use of technology evident in many areas of the curriculum. As a result of this emphasis on technology, student achievement has improved, with barriers to writing removed.

A well developed feature in the majority of classes, particularly for English language learners, is the skilled use of open ended questions to develop students’ ability to describe what they have learned in a specific lesson. Such use of questioning is a good example of teachers providing differentiated challenges to as many students as possible. However, the school is aware of the need to provide greater challenge to its most able students in all classes through improved differentiation of the teachers’ planning and instruction.

Individual teachers are aware of their responsibilities to provide challenge to all students and particularly, those students who are at risk. The principal, school leaders and coaches use data from regular tests to measure group and individual progress. The school does not just rely upon the usual bank of tests, a well established feature of all instruction, is teachers’ use of on going assessment of progress against the learning objectives in each class to plan for the next class.

Students trust their teachers to help them when they have difficulties. Teacher and student relationships are very good and bolstered by very caring support staff. This encourages good attendance. The figures and patterns of attendance are regularly scrutinized. Systems to deal with problems are very well developed and regularly reviewed to ensure that the level remains high.

**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 selected staff for the school based upon identification of their subject expertise, flexibility to respond to challenge and above all, their passion to ensure all students receive the best possible start to their education. Therefore, capacity to move the school forward is great. There is openness in school, where staff share their successes and question areas that have not proved so successful. The principal conveys a message to all staff that it is a sign of a healthy school climate to openly discuss those aspects of instruction that aren’t working and change instruction accordingly to further improve provision.

Delegation of responsibility is overt and all leaders meet with colleagues to celebrate successes and question which areas need further improvement. This is based in teachers having access to up to date and comprehensive data and being aware of their own personal responsibilities in improving student achievement.

The principal, ably supported by the administration and senior teachers, has created a team spirit where regular lesson observations are seen as opportunities to learn and progress. This is an area that the school understands needs to be developed to enable the best instructional practices to become commonplace in all classes.

Lead teachers evaluate standards thoughtfully and use every opportunity to communicate with colleagues the need to look at the progress of under achieving students. The principal ensures that where change has been necessary, teachers understand the reasons for that change. She is respected by all for her honesty in all dealings with staff and students alike. New members of staff are very enthusiastic about their welcome and support from mentors.

The school runs smoothly and is a calm and child-centered community where all feel safe and valued. Systems such as reading buddies are well established and are enjoyed by the students. Links with outside bodies in the community, such as local libraries, theatre groups and museums are used advantageously to provide students with a more enriched school life. Many links exist with local arts and sports groups which assist in widening students' horizons and the enjoyment of their school life.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

Plans for the school's development are clearly outlined within its Comprehensive Education Plan and in other more focused documents within school. Goals are regularly revisited and evaluated. These have been produced collaboratively and show a precise analysis of the school's overall goals. Frequent meetings of the school administration are held to judge whether sufficient progress is being made. Contemporary data that the school has produced is used at such meetings to diagnose whether particular groups or classes are making the necessary progress required. A specific example of well developed practice in school is the school's concentration upon the progress of both English language learners and special education students. These groups are identified through thorough testing and discussion as early in their school lives as possible. Support programs are implemented and after ten weeks they are reviewed by those teachers concerned as well as senior staff. If successful, the support is modified or lessened, if not further differentiated and different support is arranged. As a result of this immediate and timed series of interventions, the school maintains its focus upon those students in greatest need. This confirms that continuous scrutiny and modification of plans and goals, to improve provision and raise achievement, is a salient feature in school life.

This school is very adept at re-aligning resources and instruction to meet the present and future needs of its children, particularly its English language learners. This fact, alongside its focus on the highest expectations for all ensures that this school has a great capacity to continue to improve and develop.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Harry T. Stewart Sr School (PS 92)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.</b>	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>
* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.			
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			<b>X</b>
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			<b>X</b>
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			<b>X</b>
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			<b>X</b>
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff knows and respect students and responds to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.		X	
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving. The quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.			X
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X