



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

David Porter School

Public School 94

**41 - 77 Little Neck Parkway
Queens
NY 11363**

Principal: Mrs J Barbeosch

Dates of review: November 14 - 15, 2006

Reviewer: Eileen Hill

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

David Porter is a small elementary school with 410 students enrolled from kindergarten through grade 5. There are slightly more boys than girls. The school is ethnically diverse with 47.5% Asian students, 39.1% White, 10.7% Hispanic and 2.6% Black. The school is not Title 1 eligible. The school takes in around 10% of special education students. Although around 40 students have individual education plans, they are fully integrated into the school and provided with intervention support. The proportion of recent immigrants is higher than in similar and City schools at 10.7%. About 10% of students are English language learners. All teachers are fully licensed and almost all have been teaching for more than five years. Attendance rates are much higher than similar and City schools at 96.3%. The school is very stable, but it is severely overcrowded with a capacity of only 260 students. With only 17 classrooms, one grade has to have two large classes each year instead of three. In addition, there are very few meeting rooms and insufficient space for a science laboratory or art room. The school copes with this overcrowding very well and there is no impact on the performance of students but it does place a strain on all members of the school community.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school draws on a wide range of data to evaluate the progress and performance of its students.
- Goal setting is arrived at collaboratively, shared with all members of the school community and fully relevant to the needs and issues identified by performance data.
- Expectations are high across the school and the focus on individuals enables teachers to meet the needs of those students who require support and those who are high achievers.
- Instructional activity is effective with students invariably well-behaved, engaged and on task during lessons.
- The ongoing assessments that teachers carry out on students help to pinpoint very accurately what has been learnt and the next steps in learning.
- Teachers are committed, well-qualified and very enthusiastic about professional development.
- The principal is very highly respected and has a strong capacity to effect change.
- The school makes the best use it can of its crowded building with classrooms and corridors rich with language and displays of students' work.
- Parents are fully involved in the work of the school and supported by the commitment and enthusiasm of the parent coordinator.
- Attendance is high because students enjoy coming to this school.

What the school needs to improve

- Make more obvious use of data to monitor the progress of groups in the school.
- In setting goals, ensure the inclusion of measurable targets to focus on what needs to be achieved.
- Encourage teachers to share their lesson aims and learning objectives with students.
- Build in formal structures for the interim, periodic evaluation of whole school goals and plans.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school with areas for improvement.

David Porter is a caring school with committed, enthusiastic staff and happy children. Students perform well in all areas of the curriculum but, following the illness of the principal last year for an extended period, the usually high levels of performance in English language arts dropped. The focus this year is on ensuring students achieve their full potential in literacy. Extensive goal setting and improvement planning are driving this aim forward. A range of data is used to evaluate the performance and progress of students and the principal and her teachers are very aware of the progress of individuals. Although the school is severely overcrowded, classrooms provide a language rich environment, decorated with lively displays of students' work. Students are invariably well behaved in their lessons and around the school. They work well independently or in groups and pairs and almost always remain on task. Teachers and support staff are carefully selected for their commitment to the school and the students. Teachers are highly qualified and engage in a wide range of professional development, which they share with their colleagues. The work of the parent coordinator and the accessibility of the principal and the teachers have encouraged a high proportion of parents to be involved with the school. This involvement supports the engagement of students and their high attendance rates. The school has been successful over a long period and works closely in partnership with other members of the community and parents to broaden the educational opportunities for the students.

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 range of data to evaluate the performance of its students, including standardized test scores, the Princeton Review, the Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System and the outcomes of very regular assessments made by teachers on individual students. As a result, the school has a very clear picture of how well each child is doing, particularly in developing literacy and mathematics skills. The data enables the principal to compare progress at grade level year on year, and to make comparisons between classes. Thus, issues are quickly identified. In 2006, for example, fewer students achieved level 4 in English language arts than in previous years, particularly in the 3rd grade. The principal identified which classes were most affected and intervened promptly to remedy the situation and to re-focus the whole school on the effective teaching of literacy. The school also has a clear understanding of how well it is doing by comparison with similar and City schools.

Most students make good progress in all subjects and such progress is monitored carefully over the years. Students in each grade have made steady progress; a significant

proportion achieves level 4 in State tests and very few achieve below level 3. Special education students and English language learners do as well as their peers, as a result of focused intervention teaching and the rigor of assessment. Although the school is aware of the progress made by the different ethnic groups and by boys and girls, it does not analyze and prepare data on these groups.

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 draws upon all available data and other information to establish annual goals and plans for the school. She works in collaboration with the school leadership team and teachers and parents. She keeps all members of the school community well informed. At the beginning of the academic year, teachers receive a list of goals drawn from the Comprehensive Education Plan and these drive the activity of all members of the school community. Goals and plans focus on whole school improvements, which reflect the particular issues arising out of the evaluation of data. They do not yet include measurable targets for improvement, although the school is very clear about what it is aiming to achieve. Students are set individual goals on a regular basis and these are recorded by teachers and progress towards them is carefully monitored.

One of the main goals this year is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in English language arts and, in particular, to ensure as many students as possible achieve in each grade a level 4, in line with performance in previous years. School plans also concentrate on other areas of the curriculum, including mathematics and science and on developing differentiation in classroom teaching. The school employs intervention teachers to support individuals and small groups and runs an early morning class for small groups of students who require additional help, but also provides enrichment classes for those students who are high achievers. These interventions aid the school in meeting its goals.

Expectations are high throughout the school and shared by teachers, students and parents. Parents are kept very well informed of the progress of their children. Parents contribute in increasing numbers to the work of the school and are encouraged to do so by the enthusiasm and commitment of the parent coordinator. The coordinator has established a strong rapport with parents and ensures those who speak limited English feel welcome in the school and are kept informed about what the school is doing. She has established a system whereby students from a local middle school support English language learners with their homework; an initiative much appreciated by parents whose first language is not English.

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 implements the mandated curriculum very thoroughly and uses it to drive its planning and teaching at all levels. Students receive a balanced program of instruction in all subjects, including art and music. There is a strong focus on the acquisition of reading,

writing and mathematical skills. Classrooms have rich displays of language and examples of the work of students from a variety of subjects. Leveled reading libraries are available in every classroom and these are used extensively. The curriculum subjects generate ongoing data about the progress of individuals. For example, in English language arts, teachers record specific details of progress, such as whether a student understands the differences between hard and soft consonants at the beginnings of words. Running records and miscue analysis are conducted regularly and the information used to plan the next stages of learning. Teachers are fully accountable for improving instruction and for outcomes, including for special education students and English language learners.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are driven by the goals of the schools and by the needs revealed by data. The focus on differentiation is being supported in mathematics this year by an effective and experienced cluster teacher who works across grades and runs mathematics enrichment classes. She also provides whole school professional development. The teacher with responsibility for English language learners also lends specialist support to the school in developing the English language arts program; she too leads in-house professional development. The school is well over capacity and has two large 4th grade classes of 36 students. The principal has been successful in gaining intervention teachers to work with these classes to ensure students receive the one-to-one support they need.

Student attendance and engagement are high priorities for the school. Students enjoy coming to school and absence rates are very low by comparison with similar and City schools. They are well cared for and know who to go to if they have any concerns. Students are invariably well behaved, engaged by instructional activity and almost always on task.

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 selects her staff very carefully, often after she has had the opportunity to observe them working in the school; she looks for high expectations and competence in the classroom, commitment to the mission of the school and to the workshop approach to teaching that the school has adopted. The school collaborates with Adelphi University in their program for training teachers and the principal sometimes appoints students from this course if she has a vacancy. However, vacancies are rare and staffing is very stable. All teaching staff are familiar with data and use it regularly to align instruction and improve performance.

In-house professional development is derived from the school's goals and helps to focus teachers on how to implement these. All teachers have masters' qualifications and are very keen to undertake additional professional development when this is available. They attend out of school courses and bring back information and ideas which they 'turnkey' to others. There is a climate of life-long learning in the school which the principal fosters and which is further enhanced by the ongoing work with student teachers.

The principal is highly respected and has instigated systems that ensure the smooth running of the school on a daily basis. She makes formal observations of teachers. She also observes informally and has a clear and precise understanding of the strengths and development needs of individuals. Teachers also regularly observe and work with each

other. Teachers are very willing to learn from colleagues and the school as a whole has an open door policy where visitors to classrooms are accepted and welcomed. Teachers work in grade teams or in pairs for common planning time and share their methods and approaches with each other. They also use grade meetings to discuss the progress of individuals and to review the data accrued.

The school has many partnerships with outside organizations which enhance the learning of students and sometimes provide additional funding for the school. The partnership with the City Council, for example, has brought in a grant to provide laptops for students. The partnerships with Adelphi University and with the teachers' college at Columbia University keep the school up-to-date with developments in teaching and learning and have a direct impact on the quality of instruction for students.

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

This area of the school's work is proficient.

School plans and goals are regularly reviewed in the light of experience and revised where necessary. The principal does not have a formal structure in place for this process, although it happens very much as a part of ongoing assessment and review that teachers and school leaders engage in routinely.

Standardized scores and other data are used periodically to make comparisons of students' progress within and between classrooms. Teachers also make regular interim diagnostic assessments of the students in their classes and use these to modify instructional programs on a day by day or week by week basis.

The school's goals are not easy to translate into measurable outcomes. For example, one goal is to increase the use of technology as an instructional aid for remediation, English language learner instruction and differentiation of instruction. In this sense, the school cannot easily demonstrate the impact of its initiatives. However, through professional development and the way in which the staff work together as a team, the goals are implemented and are instrumental in maintaining the high performance levels achieved by students at the school. Where there is evidence that goals are not working or require modification, then the principal is quick to realign practices and resources to ensure outcomes are not compromised.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: David Porter School (PS 94)	∅	✓	+
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	