



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Dr. Thomas A Dooley**

**Public School 107**

**167- 02 45 Avenue Street  
Queens  
NY 11358**

**Principal: James Phair**

**Dates of review: November 15 - 17, 2006**

**Reviewer: George McLeman**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Public school 107, Dr Thomas A Dooley elementary school, is located in the Flushing district of Queens, New York. It teaches students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. This is the last year in which it will have grade 6 students. There are 1,048 students enrolled. The student population represents a wide range of abilities and disabilities. 137 students have special education programs; this is high in comparison with similar schools. The special needs of the students range across physical, learning, social, emotional and behavioral difficulties. The principal has led the school for sixteen years; he has a background in special education.

The school has 126 English language learners. The ethnicity of the student population comprises: White 28.7%, Black 1.3%, Hispanic 25.2%, Asian and others 44.8%. The families of the great majority of the Asian students are Korean.

The school has appeared in the last two editions of New York's best performing public elementary schools and has been deemed as a high performing school for the last three years. The school has no Title 1 funding.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The promotion of the personal, social and academic achievement of the students is given high priority.
- The school has developed and implemented a suitably broad and balanced curriculum.
- The special education program is excellent and very well implemented.
- Data is used effectively in adapting the curriculum and instruction to the needs of groups and individuals.
- All staff display commitment, skill and care in their practice.
- The school has developed a collegial culture.
- The school's leadership has established a supportive tone.
- Attendance rates are high.
- Good relationships exist between the school and the parents and caregivers of its students.

### What the school needs to improve

- The individual professional development of teachers can be better informed through the use of data.
- Data needs to be more effectively used to evaluate the progress of students over time.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

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

Dr. Thomas A Dooley School has high expectations of teaching and learning and they are fully met. Good State test results, full engagement of students in learning, detailed assessments of progress, skillful instruction and high levels of appreciation of parents, all serve to indicate that this is a good school. The success is based on the commitment of all members of staff to the goals of the school and in particular the collaborative way the faculty plan and share their work. This, in turn, is brought about by the effective leadership of the principal and assistant principal.

Public School 107 is also an inclusive school. The student population represents a wide range of abilities, disabilities, social background, ethnicity and language. The needs of special education students include severe physical and medical disability, social, behavioral and emotional difficulties and slow learning. The curriculum, instruction and accommodation are well aligned to meet these needs.

The school collects and uses data well to identify strengths and weaknesses in its work and to plan for improvement. Test scores, school assessments and detailed individual observations contribute well to provide a detailed picture of progress and achievement across the full spectrum of the student population. The school is well positioned to develop the use of data to track the students' achievements over time and to plan and evaluate the individual professional development of the teachers.

#### **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 leaders and teachers collect and analyze data on the students' achievements from a wide range of sources. These include the scores from the State and City tests, the results of the English language learner tests, the Princeton review interim assessments, and a variety of assessments devised by the school.

From the State and City tests in English language arts, mathematics and science, comparisons are made with similar schools, with schools across the City, and with the school's results from previous years. The comparisons show that the students at Public School 107 are doing well. The favorable comparisons with other schools within the district and with last year's test scores are attributed to improved instruction based on full and accurate data. Leaders and teachers further analyze the data to identify anomalies, to spot problems and to find solutions.

Detailed school assessments and records of progress augment the data from the State test scores. From their earliest days in school, the students' progress in speaking, reading and writing is carefully monitored and diagnosed. Systems such as the 'Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System' and the 'Developing Reading Assessment' are used in addition to the teachers' running records of progress. With the older students, some item analysis is made from the reviews of the students' test scores in previous years, but these are broad categories and helpful information to guide instruction is not easily accessible.

The leaders and teachers are particularly concerned to identify the progress of students who are at risk of falling behind. Teachers are quick to spot the difficulties of students and, where necessary they relate them to their colleagues in the academic intervention service. Students who have special educational needs are given particularly close attention. Early diagnoses are made through medical or educational assessments, in for example speech difficulties, and suitable interventions drafted in the individual educational plans.

Analysis of achievement by ethnicity reveals significant discrepancies across the groups. Group results are closely monitored and suitable diagnoses and strategies for improvements are devised. For example, the Hispanic students make up about 40% of the student population yet their representation among the group of higher-performing students is well below this. The school employs appropriate strategies for addressing this.

The school has started to look at data to identify the progress of individual students or groups of students over time. For example, the leaders have looked at year on year scores of the 4th graders as they moved through 5th grade. It is reported, however, that this has not so far proved too helpful, because the tests and the subsequent scoring are not consistent. The school is now well placed to take this on and to build on the progress that has already been made.

**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.**

Led by the principal and assistant principal, the teachers use the data effectively to set appropriately challenging goals for all students. The close collaboration among all members of staff in setting longer and shorter term goals is a strong feature of the work of the school. This is done at grade, subject and classroom level. Through the Comprehensive Education Plan, goals and targets are set at whole school level but, although faculty and the school leadership team have approved these goals, they are not fully familiar with the detail. The data on the document is wide ranging and complex and is not readily available or useful in directing or guiding the work of the school.

At grade, subject and classroom levels, much emphasis is placed on using data to set objectives and plan strategies for improvement. Grade leaders, frequently with the help of subject coaches, analyze data and discuss the implications for teaching and learning. All teachers keep a close watch on the students' reading and writing progress. From pre-kindergarten onwards the students' learning is closely assessed and recorded. Good use is made of the assessment data, for example, to ensure that the children are allocated appropriately challenging reading books. The interim assessments from the Princeton review give an indication of which items of the curriculum are posing challenges for both teachers and students.

With the special education students the teachers and assistants pay close attention to the small steps the students make. A wide range of evidence is used to assess progress. Frequent formal and informal discussions are arranged to discuss the effectiveness of the intervention strategies. These include case conferences attended by staff from the school and external services. Goals and objectives on the students' individual education plans are precisely drafted and closely monitored.

The high expectations and the goals of the school are frequently conveyed to parents. Parent-teacher conferences, where the students' progress and achievements are discussed, are regularly held. The school places considerable emphasis on gaining the support and participation of parents and caregivers in the work of the school and in supporting the students' education.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

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

The school's high expectations of students are reflected in the challenging curriculum it has set. This is continually reviewed on the basis of the assessments of progress. The school's mandated curriculum, especially in English language arts, is planned in close alignment to the students' learning. This is done through careful curriculum mapping; taking into account previously covered topics and the students' achievements.

The data on achievement is also used to allocate students to differentiated instructional groups. Although the predominant group of students is heterogeneous, the school has classes in each of the upper grades that accommodate higher and lower achieving students. The curriculum and the instruction in both groups are suitably challenging and supportive. Decisions on staffing and the allocation of financial resources in general are taken with the students' needs in mind.

Grade meetings discussing the organization of the curriculum, instructional strategies and the progress of individuals and groups are regularly held. In mathematics, for example, the mathematics coach provides detailed guidance on how the school's new curriculum can help in responding to the individual problems of students.

Teachers plan their instruction with the previous achievements of the students in mind. Using formally completed assessment records and informal notes they ensure that the level of the instruction is appropriately pitched. During their instruction, teachers are aware of the responses and progress of students. They ask challenging questions to reveal understanding and note answers. In many English classes, for example, the teachers write short notes on their observations and discussions and use these immediately or subsequently in revising their programs. Students who are seen to be falling behind are invited to attend extra classes at the beginning and at the end of the school day or on Saturday morning.

The students' attendance is also given high priority. This is monitored closely and any unexplained or persistent absences prompt intervention or referral.

**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 leaders continually praise the skill and commitment of the teachers. Teachers are chosen on the basis of their expectations of students particularly those who have special education needs or those whose first language is not English. In return teachers are expected to gain and use data on their students' learning to support the students and to improve their instruction.

The principal and assistant frequently make classroom observations. The majority of these are carried out informally without records kept or goals set. Where required, however, specific goals are set for individual teachers and followed through to ensure improvement. The data from most of the observations is not systematically kept, however, and they do not directly link with the professional development of the teachers. This is an area that the school could beneficially develop.

Professional development is selected on the basis of needs identified by grade coordinators or classroom teachers often when new initiatives are launched. 'New Impact' mathematics has been instigated recently, for example, and many professional development sessions at school and grade level are aligned to this. The teachers frequently discuss and share instructional ideas. The mathematics coach plays a prominent role in this area of the school's work.

Grade teams meet at least once a week and they discuss the progress of the students and how this aligns to instruction and curriculum mapping. Typically they invite professional development or subject coaches to attend to discuss new or revised curricular initiatives. The collegial approach, encouraged by the principal, is evident in these meetings where teachers readily speak of difficulties in instruction and attempt to devise and share solutions. Teachers speak highly of the learning and sharing that takes place there. The school has close links with external support agencies such as the school psychologists and other specialists; they attend meetings of the pupil personnel committees and provide expert guidance.

**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 leaders have firm personal views on the progress of the school relative to its stated intentions. These are derived mainly from scrutinizing the data, discussions with teachers, observations of practice, attendance at meetings, or through contact with staff and parents. The principal, for example, has detailed knowledge of the work of the special education team and its impact on the students' well-being and progress.

At grade and subject level, data from tests like the Princeton review are used to review and amend curricular and instructional strategies. The school's Comprehensive Education Plan officially provides the main means of setting and assessing whole school goals but this is not frequently used in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Teachers

do know the main priorities of the school this year, however, and have clear views of their implementation and progress in their respective roles and responsibilities

Data on the teachers' professional development and the students' progress over time are not fully used in evaluating the school's work. The school is, however, well placed to address both of these areas of improvement.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Dr. Thomas A Dooley [PS 107]</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 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
<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	