



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Dutch Kills School**

**Public School 112**

**25 - 05 37 Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11101**

**Principal: Rafael Campos-Gatjens**

**Dates of review: May 21 – 22, 2007**

**Reviewer: Marian Prior**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Dutch Kills School, is situated in Long Island City, Queens. There are 575 students enrolled from kindergarten through grade 5. Approximately 44% of students are Hispanic, 25% Asian, 21% Black, 9% White and 1% Native American. Ten per cent are on special education programs and 30% are English language learners.

The school receives Title 1 funding, the percentage of students entitled being comparable to similar schools but greater than the average for New York City schools. The percentage of students newly arrived in the country, at 10.5% in 2005 is slightly higher than that of other City schools. Those who have arrived most recently came from Bangladesh, Ecuador, Nepal and Mexico. Attendance was 92.3% in 2006, which is in line with similar and City school averages.

The school has had a period of considerable discontinuity with three principals since 2004. The current principal has been in post since February 2005. An annex to the school, Family College, which provided education for children whose parents were studying at Fiorello La Guardia Community College, closed at the end of the last school year. This closure resulted in the loss of around 40 students from the school roll which further impacted on the budget, school organization and the number of teacher.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- There is a strong bond between staff and the school's open-door policy results in high levels of collaboration between them.
- The school uses a range of formative, summative and diagnostic assessments, which enables staff to determine the next steps in students' learning and determine any interventions that are necessary.
- The new system to monitor students' progress provides an excellent record of achievements in reading.
- Routines are well established in the classrooms and students are clear about what they will do each day.
- The school provides good support to newly arrived students and their families enabling them to settle well, be assessed quickly and receive prompt support.
- The professional development team links effectively with other school teams to provide staff with continued, effective training.
- Parents value the hard work of the principal in driving the school forward.

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop greater accountability in delegated leadership, ensure that lines of communication are clear, agreed plans and policies are adhered to and deadlines made explicit.
- Reinforce the school's high expectations by creating an effective hierarchy of consequences for unacceptable behavior, which is clearly understood by all students and implemented by all staff.
- Set up program of professional development to enable teachers to differentiate their instruction so that students take a more active part in their learning and increase their independence as learners.
- Make the system for recording data easier to manipulate, so that all staff make more effective use of the information when they plan lessons and senior leaders in judging the overall progress of the school and of groups of students.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

The considerable turmoil of the last four years has left its mark but the school has now established a number of teams to drive initiatives forward. These are starting to make a positive impact and underpinned by the hard work of the principal and the collegiality of the close-knit, dedicated staff. There is a strong commitment to initiatives such as balanced literacy, professional development and collaborative working. This contributes to rises in students' achievement, better progress, and good citizenship.

Historically, communications between parents and the school has been weak. The principal is encouraging teachers to take more responsibility for developing positive relationships and providing regular feedback to families. The students benefit from extensive links with community based organizations.

### 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 uses a range of formative, summative and diagnostic assessments. It supplements the State tests in literacy and mathematics with Princeton Review interim assessments, the Language Assessment Battery and the City science tests. In mathematics it uses school-designed progress checks and a pacing calendar to ensure that teachers keep up to date with requirements.

The current system for recording data is seen as cumbersome and not all teachers complete the information accurately. The teachers are unaware of the dates for data collection or other dead-lines as the school does not publish them.

The recently introduced monitoring system with assessment binders and clear schedules has promise. It sets out the rationale behind the process and the key assessments teachers must make. The system simplifies the transfer of data from one grade teacher to the next, thus providing an ongoing record of data collected and enabling development of a comprehensive picture of the strengths and areas of need for each student.

The range of data gathered through the new system is sufficient to provide an adequate overview of the progress of different student groups. The data has not been collected or analyzed over a sufficient period to enable the school to make comparisons against the performance of other schools. This remains a weakness.

**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 proficient.**

The Comprehensive Education sets out the school's goals. These are constructed following analysis of standardized test data in reading, mathematics, science and social studies. The lack of depth to the analysis of performance of different groups of students remains a barrier to plans at all levels being as sharp as they should be.

The school is making better use of data to set plans at grade and class levels but the process is relatively recent. Until bedded down, and use by all staff to make demonstrative improvements this aspect can be no better than proficient.

The academic intervention team meets regularly to review individual student’s progress. They make good use of the data collected to identify the support required and modify programs. Push-in and pull-out support are used and there are established Special Education and English as a Second Language programs. Those at risk are identified early and a range of strategies put in place to help them. These include after-school and extended-day programs, individual support from members of the academic intervention team and Summer School.

The teachers do not always use their time or professional development to maximum effect. The barriers caused by an historical lack of accountability are proving difficult to break down. Not everyone focuses sufficiently in the same direction or adheres to policies and procedures. For example, teachers and support teachers feel that the system of sanctions is not applied consistently. Parents are equally concerned about contradictory actions of adults in the school and perceptions about promises being made but not followed up.

The school has a clear aim to help students improve and work with their parents in this but current procedures lack coherence and impact is dissipated. There is insufficient consideration of how the role of parents can be enhanced in helping improve student performance. The high achievement to which it aspires depends too much on individuals rather than the staff as a whole through corporate responsibility.

**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 curriculum is well aligned to the school’s goals and generates sufficient opportunities for assessment. The school uses Columbia Teachers College ‘Balanced Literacy Curriculum’ units of study at each grade level and continually reflects and reviews this work. Older students use online reading and mathematics programs. These provide useful interim assessments, which help teachers, coaches, administrators and parents to work together in measuring progress and modifying their interventions accordingly.

Those supported through academic intervention access a wide range of applications, programs and resources. These include Breakthrough to Literacy, Great Leaps, Foundations and Glass Analysis to match assessed individual needs.

The teachers are held to account for their work and for making improvements to their practice, through regular monitoring checks and a program of professional development. The teaching engages the students' sufficiently but does not always challenge the higher achieving students. Accountable talk' and encouragement in the use of subject-specific vocabulary helps students to engage in their learning.

Most teachers have sufficiently well-organized classrooms and accessible resources to enable students to develop skills of independent learning. The educational assistants work highly collaboratively with grade teachers, providing good support to those with specific learning needs, as for example, through development of writing rubrics. Where best practice is seen, skilful questioning techniques help students to develop their higher order thinking skills. Like other aspects of the school's work this is not consistently applied by all teachers.

The scheduling allows staff common preparation and planning time across grades. This enables teachers to plan together, adjust units of study and develop their own expertise. It further enables them to share good practice, disseminate information about students and explain successful methodologies.

Students say that know who to speak to if they have problems at school and appreciate the help and guidance provided by the adults there. They express worries over the behavior of a minority of students, particularly during unstructured times in the day. They are confused by the inconsistencies of teachers in dealing with matters such as bad language, non-wearing of uniform and poor behavior in lessons.

The school celebrates 100% attendance and makes prompt checks on absentees as a matter of routine. The school deals well with persistent absentees, making good use of the attendance team to work with families. Punctuality problems dealt with less robustly.

**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 engages staff on their skills and abilities to work within a team and set high expectations. There is little consideration of the ability of teachers to analyze or use data to improve teaching or raise the outcomes for students.

These are the professional development and literacy teams, who each meet twice a month, are the key players in the drive for improvements. The latter team is well supported by an external consultancy program to help teachers improve their classroom skills and raise the levels of students' basic skills in English and mathematics. For example, a fourth grade teacher who developed ideas for literacy centers, in conjunction with the consultant teacher, shared her expertise at a meeting with her colleagues. This provided large amounts of information on organization, ways to help students make presentations and to strategies to develop independent learning skills.

The professional development team is highly pro-active in determining individual and collective requirements. It makes good use of in-house and external sources and members have regular discussions with their colleagues to monitor and assess the impact of the professional development. The external coach and the school's mathematics and literacy coaches provide further effective professional development to help the teachers set targets for individual students and for groups. The one area that professional development has not yet successfully addressed is that of helping the teachers to differentiate their lessons to meet the needs of students with a wide range of achievement levels.

The principal and assistant principal undertake classroom observations and provide teachers with written comments to help improve their work. These make explicit the short and long term goals for specific students and methods by which they can be achieved. There is presently no definitive date set for feedback to be given or requirement for teachers to take responsibility for implementation of suggested improvements.

The school daily routines run well. However, students and parents express concern over lack of consistent practice by adults in the school in operating published procedures. This results in a loss of confidence and in students not feeling as well supported as they might be otherwise, both in the classrooms and around the site.

The parents are highly appreciative of the efforts of the principal, his availability in addressing their concerns and his implementation of innovations, both within the school and in liaison with outside bodies. The school has sufficient capacity to make further improvements.

**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.**

Monitoring and evaluation of the school by the administration has developed rapidly in the past year. The wide-ranging data collected by staff is used to amend classroom practice and meet the diagnosed needs of the students. It is also used to re-group students as appropriate, and use academic intervention services to best effect.

There is sufficient use of the data to enable goals to be modified and re-aligned in response to changing needs. Writing samples are collected and analyzed regularly to adjust programs and construct professional development.

Although members of the school are aware of the Comprehensive Education Plan, it does not impact strategically on their daily work nor do they use it as a strategic tool for changing practice. More strategic use of data is required to support key plans.

An annual assessment calendar is proposed, to develop a more focused approach to considering the implications of each assessment. The lack of a shared overall school year calendar outlining key dates and forthcoming deadlines prevents a clear understanding of timelines and limits effective responses to required educational demands.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Dutch Kills School (PS 112)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<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>		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"> <li>ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>		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"> <li>all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		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.

<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.		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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<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	