



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Lorraine Hansberry School

Public School 118

190-20 109th Road

Queens

NY 11412

Principal: Adele Armstrong

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Reviewer: Jan Lomas

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 118, The Lorraine Hansberry School, is located in Queens and serves 680 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The student population is 83% Black, 7% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian and 8% other ethnic groups. Approximately 9% have recently arrived in the country, mainly from Jamaica, Haiti and Japan. Almost 8% of the school population are special education students and just over 4% are English language learners.

The percentage of students eligible for Title 1 funding is 91.8%, which is high in comparison with other City schools. The rate of stability within the school population (91.8%) is much the same as that for similar schools and a little lower than that for City-wide schools. The rate of attendance is 90.3% which is somewhat lower than similar and City-wide schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is well respected and has been successful in creating a learning environment focused on nurturing the whole child.
- The principal has a clear and strategic view of the use of data to effectively support school development and leads others in developing these skills.
- The school analyzes data and uses the information in a meaningful way to drive planning and goal-setting for instruction and school improvement.
- All staff work collaboratively to ensure that the strengths of the team are utilized in order to provide the best for students.
- The principal is ably assisted by her cabinet.
- Students speak with confidence about their pride in the school and about the respectful and trusting relationships they have with adults.
- High expectations are conveyed to students who appreciate and feel supported by teachers who motivate them to achieve success.
- The school runs smoothly and is a calm and orderly place in which to work and learn.
- Older students are given the opportunity to develop a sense of responsibility and to contribute to the school community in valuable ways.
- The staff work hard to develop attractive classroom environments which support learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop and implement tools to better rationalize and organize existing data so that it is more manageable and accessible to all staff.
- Build on the positive steps in professional development to ensure that all teachers differentiate instruction effectively to meet student needs.
- Develop rubrics in order to ensure that the curriculum generates specific data that is shared with students and to assist with the further alignment of curriculum planning.
- Refine strategic planning so that there are more specific time-frames and accountabilities for achieving key goals and priorities.
- Continue to develop the range of positive strategies to build partnerships with parents and assist them in contributing to their children's learning.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The Lorraine Hansberry School, Public School 118, is a learning community where staff collaborate well and strive to ensure that instructional programs, the curriculum and enrichment opportunities meet the needs of all students in its multicultural population.

The principal has a clear, strategic understanding of the use of data to drive school development. She has a strong grasp on where her staff use data effectively and where there is still room for improvement. Leadership teams use data in a meaningful way to ensure the focus is firmly upon student achievement and development, both academically and socially.

Students know that all staff want the best for them and speak with conviction about the encouragement and support they receive to achieve success. The school has had some success in developing a range of strategies to involve parents more actively in supporting their child's learning, but recognizes that it has yet to reach all parents and carers.

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.

Information is gathered from a number of sources to enable teachers and the administration to understand the profile of student achievement and progress in each class and grade. E-CLAS for younger grades, Princeton Review and formal test data are used alongside a varied range of school-based assessments. Students entering kindergarten are assessed to provide a baseline to establish the starting points for instruction. Teachers assess by using conferencing and running records and by 'benchmarking' student work to calibrate their expectations. This means that they are regularly updating their view of students' development and acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. A number of programs which track specific skills development, for example 'Voyager' for phonics teaching, are also used to monitor the progress of individuals and groups.

Data for subgroups such as special education students, English language learners and different ethnic groups is examined and discussed to ensure all teachers are aware of any implications for instruction, resourcing and whole school development. For example, the needs of specific groups of students within ethnic populations are emphasized, often using the awareness and knowledge of individual staff, so that cultural diversity can be sensitively reflected in the approaches to instruction.

The school analyzes data relative to progress and performance over time and year by year. For example, progress is monitored by using the Gains Report which enables the school to focus upon those students who are 'on target' or 'below target' for grade 4. Data

is also analyzed to see where progress could be further enhanced and accelerated so that teachers can plan accordingly. Older students are involved in understanding the implications of some data so that they know what they need to do to improve. Such scrutiny of the range of data means that the school can look at progress year by year for students and cohorts and compare the relative performance of classes and grades. The principal makes comparisons with other schools by looking at the performance of similar schools and by 'buddying' with other principals.

Overall, a broad and detailed range of data is kept by the school in order to monitor progress and achievement effectively at all levels and to identify issues for continuous development. The principal is aware that, at this stage, that time might be usefully spent thinking about how to further rationalize data and bring it together to create more accessible overviews which will assist the school in its analyses.

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 school has a clear schedule for assessments which, alongside teachers' ongoing record keeping, is used during meetings to discuss and plan collaboratively. The structure of grade level meetings and the work of curriculum, data and instructional teams mean that data is looked at closely and analyzed in different ways to make decisions. The principal, cabinet and coaches also attend these meetings so that they can monitor, guide and support as necessary. Teachers in the same grade plan together to develop instructional practice and to consider appropriate groupings.

Emphasis is given to using all available information to assist individual progress for those students most at risk specific by identifying well-targeted interventions for academic and social support t. Data is also used to assist teachers in identifying those students whose progress could be further accelerated and enhanced. The principal encourages continuous reflection about next steps, by always asking for the evidence.

At the end of the school year everyone evaluates accomplishments and after updating when data is added to the picture. This review is used by the school leadership team, involving staff and parents, to plan for whole school development through the Comprehensive Education Plan. This includes detailed analysis of data in key areas and leads to clear identification of what needs to be done.

Students express their support for the school and the high expectations that are conveyed by teachers who motivate and challenge them. One said, 'Teachers expect us to be confident and top level' and another spoke of the teacher who 'took me on above grade level.' The school works hard to encourage parents to become involved in the life of the school. However, it is not always easy to engage some in becoming more informed about what's going on in the classroom and efforts continue in this area. The school reaches out in various ways by providing 'mini versions' of curriculum maps, 'Know your School' nights and parent workshops as well as parent and teacher consultation evenings.

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 curriculum provides for instruction in the key areas of English language arts and mathematics and also opportunities to learn about social studies, science, art, computers and library studies. It has been mapped to ensure all mandated areas are covered and to allow for cross curricular planning such as where between literacy skills can link with other content areas. Staff look at the curriculum on a monthly basis to consider where it needs to be adjusted for emerging student needs. Where the school has identified a need for emphasis on a particular skill or learning area, this is mapped in or the pacing of units of work adjusted. The school is aware of the need to work on the development of rubrics in order to ensure that elements of the curriculum generate specific data, shared with students, which identifies what students know, understand and can do and what they need to do to next to improve.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are carefully and appropriately made using thorough analysis of data about student performance. The structure of team meetings supports professional discussions to consider where changes need to be made to planning and the allocation of resources as specific issues arise.

Teachers discuss and plan in teams to develop instructional practice and to make decisions about interventions to support student progress based on their ongoing assessment and use of data. In turn, students generally respond well to their instruction and, when teaching is well - organized and clear about what is expected, carefully paced, interesting, and challenging, are very interested in their learning. However, the principal is aware that teachers’ ability to use differentiation effectively in the classroom to meet the needs of all students, and thus, fully engage them, is not yet consistent overall.

Students feel that teachers care for them and one commented that ‘the teachers are like parents when we’re in school.’ They feel comfortable with their teachers and can turn to them with their concerns, but are also aware that their teachers want the best for them and say ‘they push you and don’t give up.’. Attendance is given appropriate attention. A broad range of procedures ensures that absence is followed up, alongside incentives such as rewards for 100% attendance.

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.

Teachers are aware that professional development opportunities are driven by the issues arising from the analysis of data. The school surveys staff to ascertain their individual needs and also references professional development to priorities and goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan. Collaborative meetings ensure that teachers are not only actively involved in grade and whole school planning and decision-making but are also enabled to support each other and share best practices. Teachers are confident in using data. The principal has fostered this competence by distributing responsibility for data analysis through the team infrastructure, which scrutinizes data for different purposes. Teachers are also actively involved in study groups, inter-visitations and demonstration

lessons and are supported and guided by the work of the literacy and mathematics coaches.

Classroom observations are regularly carried out by the principal and the assistant principal both formally and informally. Written and verbal feedback is given as appropriate and areas for development are supported in the most appropriate way, such as visiting a colleague to observe their practice, receiving specific support from a coach, or professional reading. Newer teachers are given specific support and a 'buddy system' for mentorship and additional support is provided where appropriate.

The selection of new staff involves a team drawn from teachers, staff and parents. The interview process includes questions about approaches to teaching, success in helping students to make good progress through the use of data and about how applicants structure, plan and assess learning experiences. The recruitment process is appropriately designed to ensure a match with the school's approaches to teaching and learning.

The principal is well respected and is successful in leading a community that supports the academic development and personal growth of the students in its care. The school runs smoothly and teachers work hard to make classrooms inviting. Students are encouraged to develop personal responsibility and to play a full and meaningful part in the life of the school, such as the school council. Older students undertake roles and responsibilities, such as library monitors and announcers at the beginning of the school day.

The school has an after-school program sponsored by the Police Athletic League. Opportunities are provided to enrich the curriculum and students' personal development. These include tutorial programs in English language arts and mathematics, and also steel band, chess club, career day and college day as well as a varied range of other activities

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.

Following the yearly summative review and detailed analysis of data, measurable goals for school improvement are formulated as part of the Comprehensive Education Plan. However, it is not always clear who will be accountable for overseeing the monitoring of each goal to ensure progress is on track. Broad time-frames are included but these are not always broken down into interim goals when particular elements of implementation and review can take place to allow for mid-course corrections and fine-tuning.

Evaluation of the plan is ongoing and adjustments and amendments are made through a continuous process of review by the various staff teams which leads to, for example, additional resourcing, as needs emerge during the year. This process also leads to the identification of new areas for development which then feed into the next cycle of planning and goal-setting. Comparisons are made within and between classrooms to ensure that all programs and interventions are meeting the needs of individual students, and that students in the same grade are progressing at the same rate.

Planning for instruction, interventions and the adjustment of programs designed to focus on targeted needs of individuals, groups and cohorts is also an ongoing process facilitated by the structure of collaborative meetings. The school has identified that teachers'

capacity to respond in an agile way to emerging student data by effectively differentiating instruction is, as yet, not consistent across the school.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Lorraine Hansberry School (PS 118)	∅	✓	+
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