



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Public School 123  
145-01 119 Avenue  
Queens  
NY 114**

**Principal: Cynthia Sumay-Eaton**

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

**Reviewers: Ken Bryan and Stephen Szemerenyi**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Public School 123 serves 608 students from pre kindergarten through grade 5. The school's ethnic composition is 77% Black, 13% Hispanic, 7% Asian and others and 3% White. The proportion of students eligible for Title 1 funding is 69%, which is slightly lower than similar schools and the number of special education students is approximately 15%. There are 4% English language learners, whose first language is either: Spanish; Haitian Creole; or Punjabi. The student attendance rate is approximately 89% which is lower than similar and City-wide school averages.

The school's distinctiveness lies in its history. Built 80 years ago, it was the first public school in the South Ozone Park area. The substantial building certainly shows its heritage, but the interior is well organized and wears its age very well. The current principal was appointed in November 2005.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is highly respected and she has the capacity to effect change.
- The school runs smoothly on a day to day basis, student behavior is appropriate and the hallways and classrooms are well-organized places of quiet and calm.
- A range of onsite professional development is provided which is effectively coordinated by the principal and her administration.
- The impact of the professional development program is systematically and regularly monitored and evaluated.
- Budgeting decisions are creatively made to meet the needs of all students and the faculty.
- The faculty is ready to help students and responds well to their personal needs.

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop systems to collate and present student data at school, grade and class level to facilitate effective analysis.
- Collaboratively devise objectively measurable goals and plans for all groups in the school.
- Develop effective measures to compare the relative performance of Public School 123 with similar schools, and to analyze comparative data internally in terms of ethnicity, gender and high achievers.
- Develop a system to ensure that goals and plans for improving student performance impact effectively upon all members of the school community.
- Raise levels of attendance by introducing incentives for classes and grades.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is an undeveloped school with some proficient aspects.**

Since arriving in the school in late 2005, the principal has become highly respected by all members of the school community and she is steadily introducing rigor, accountability and consistency. The school runs smoothly on a day to day basis, student behavior is appropriate and the atmosphere in the classrooms and hallways is conducive to learning. The faculty knows and respects the students and they provide appropriate personal guidance.

The principal and her administration also meet the needs of the faculty by providing targeted professional development programs. The impact of the professional development program is systematically and regularly monitored and evaluated. The principal also uses the budget creatively to meet the needs of the students and staff.

The principal recognizes and understands the challenges that lie ahead. The school's strategic use of data and the setting of high expectations and associated goals require immediate development and low levels of student attendance should be challenged. The principal and her cabinet should develop robust systems for the storage and interpretation of data in order to devise informed goals and plans for improvement. The principal clearly demonstrates the capacity to manage these changes and to meet these challenges.

### **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 undeveloped.**

The school uses a mixture of standardized state test for grades 3 through 5 to generate a range of data. In the early childhood years the school uses the Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System tests and Dibels assessments to provide data on individual students and these are supplemented by interim assessments using the Princeton review. Other benchmark assessments and the testing of phonics provide useful diagnostic information for the teachers. A mixture of summative, diagnostic and formative assessments are designed or selected by teachers to inform their teaching. The teachers compile portfolios on each student and they are reviewed during one to one conferences. The school is developing its proficiency in the analysis of the data, both in the classroom and at the strategic level. Some analysis of disaggregated data is used to help teachers meet the needs of the English language learner and special needs populations. However, there is limited analysis of the data for other ethnic groups, and the relative differences in performance between boys and girls or high achieving students.

The school has begun to compare its performance against that of other schools. The principal in particular has analyzed the school's performance compared with similar schools as part of her own performance review. The assistant principal will also begin to examine comparative data and trends. However, this is an inconsistent feature as trends over time or comparisons between different school cohorts are undeveloped.

The school does not have a systematic and strategic approach to the organization of data. This should involve improvements in the use of technology to store and present the results of the data analysis.

**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 undeveloped.**

Goals are set collaboratively for individual students and for classes and grades. Content area, special needs and English language learner population goals are compiled for the Comprehensive Education Plan by teachers, parents and the administration and these are reviewed monthly. The school is developing its capacity to effectively analyze student data to inform objective, realistic and measurable goals. The school’s proficiency in the use of data derived from the standardized test to set accurate goals is limited, and this has been identified as an area for future development.

Students in need of immediate academic and personal improvement are identified effectively and their individual education plans are clear and reflect good communication with the parents. Scale scores have been used to determine the need for extended day and Saturday academy programs. High expectations and goals are continually communicated with the parents and caregivers. A monthly newsletter and calendar are useful means to articulate the school’s expectations and the school encourages face to face meetings between teachers and parents. Events, workshops and consultation evenings are relatively well attended.

Goals and plans for improving student performance do not adequately drive the activity of all members of the school community. The principal is working hard to raise the capacity of faculty members. In addition, her cabinet requires some guidance and support in the use of data and technology at the strategic level.

**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 school effectively modifies the mandated curriculum based upon its analysis and interpretation of the data. For example, the school’s adoption of the ‘four-square model’ for writing was based upon assessment results and teachers are adapting their reading programs through the supplementing of extra novels and other texts. Teachers are held accountable by the principal and her cabinet colleagues. Differentiation based upon data is expected within all heterogeneous classes. This however, is a developing feature and the school has assigned some professional development programs to address deficiencies amongst the faculty. The principal’s budgetary decisions are clearly based upon the available data. She is able to creatively modify staffing and scheduling decisions using data. Data is gathered and discussed at grade and instructional team meetings and adjustments are made, such as the provision of intervention services and extended day/Saturday academy programs.

The instructional programs actively engage the students. The students are actively and involved in their learning which was demonstrated by the successful use of student-teacher conferences. The classrooms are well-organized and the atmosphere within them is very conducive to learning. Examples of the use of student portfolios and the use of one to one conferences were consistent features. The teachers know and respect the students and they respond well to their personal needs.

Student attendance is relatively low, when compared to City and State averages. The school celebrates attendance and challenges absence through a systematic process. However, further work is required to challenge compliant parents and to encourage attendance by setting effective incentives for students by class or grade. The school is about to create an attendance committee to address these issues.

**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 principal selects her teachers on the basis of their high expectations for student performance and their potential to respond to professional development, which includes support for their levels of confidence and competence in the use of data and technology. The school uses data to determine the nature of school-based professional development programs. Professional development is effectively coordinated and provided by the mathematics and literacy coaches, and by the early childhood professional developer. As a consequence, teacher confidence and competence has improved in a number of areas. Frequent informal and formal observations by the principal and her two assistant principals provide further information to guide the level and scope of differentiated interventions. Professional development related to the interpretation of data has been successful. The school is developing a culture of openness, which includes peer to peer observations and support. Best practice is currently not shared openly between teachers on each grade. Planning at grade level and within the content areas is effective in some areas. This inconsistent picture is more apparent in certain grades and support is being targeted by the cabinet to create a more consistent approach to planning and the analysis of data.

The principal is fully respected by the whole school community and she demonstrates the capacity to manage change. Through her guidance, systems are now starting to be introduced which are clear and manageable. The school runs smoothly on a day to day basis and levels of consistency and vigilance are improving with regard to the following of systems and procedures.

The school effectively encourages support from a number of community based organizations to enhance the education provided by the school. An example of this is the 'Out of School Time' community based group providing after school and holiday 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 proficient.**

The school's plans include interim goals and interim assessments which modify the Comprehensive Education Plan. The use of any available data, interpreted by teachers in grades and content areas is a developing feature. The principal's performance review is a more effective tool to determine need based upon data. The school reviews the CEP in May/June and again in September. However, the principal accepts the need to have a mid-year review.

The comparisons the school makes regarding the relative performance of the different disaggregated sub-groups are limited in terms of scope and their links to data. The principal has made some modifications with regards to quantifiable performance targets for certain classes and grades. She is undertaking a full analysis of performance goals in relation to the new school progress report and the writing of the CEP. This is a developing work in progress as she determines the level of teacher expectations and the quality of the data to inform goals. The school uses some periodic and interim diagnostic assessments to determine need within the academic intervention service programs and a process is being followed to inform medium- and long-term plans based upon current data.

The principal is determined to overhaul the school self-review process so that a clear cycle of review based upon data can be established. Goals will be determined by interim and standardized assessments and the data will be stored, analyzed and presented using technology. Consequently, all members of the school community will be involved in the self-review to establish shared ownership and accountability.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Public School 123</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	