



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Maspeth Elementary School

Public School 153

**60 - 02 60 Lane
Queens
NY 11378**

Principal: Susan Bauer

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Reviewer: Thomas J. Clark

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Maspeth Elementary School serves approximately 1340 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 6. The student population reflect its community with 46% White, 45% Hispanic, 7% Asian, 1% Black students and a small proportion from other ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 10% of the school are special education students. Additionally, 12% are English Language Learners, with Polish and Spanish as the dominant languages. The school does not receive Title 1 as only 45% of the students are eligible. This is in line with similar schools but significantly lower than City schools. The attendance rate is 92%, which is slightly lower than that for similar schools and in line with City schools.

The school offers the Beacon Program for students identified as academically gifted. There is one Beacon class in each grade, from 1 through 6.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school administration and staff gather a wealth of formal and informal data and uses it effectively to monitor the progress of all students.
- Data from the City-wide and State assessments are disaggregated before it would otherwise be available so teachers are enabled to plan well-differentiated instruction.
- The academic intervention team closely monitors the impact of various interventions on the progress of assigned students.
- School planning involves a collaborative process that engages the entire school community.
- Based on a careful review of data, school teams re-aligned the literacy and mathematics curricula with the State standards and developed assessments to track student progress toward those standards.
- Teachers maintain comprehensive assessment binders for English language arts and mathematics, detailing both class and individual student progress.
- The school offers extensive professional development opportunities for staff, supported in part by grants and utilizing both internal and external providers.
- Data gathered during observations and walkthroughs are summarized and fed back to teachers monthly, providing specific suggestions for improving instruction.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to gather data for science and social studies to make them comparable to those for English language arts and mathematics.
- Continue to explore ways of providing additional time for teachers and administrators to turnkey information from professional development.
- Develop all action plan goals and objectives with objectively measurable indicators and criteria for success to facilitate the monitoring of the school's progress.
- Continue to find ways to improve student attendance.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

Maspeth Elementary is a large, extremely well run school. Although the school enrolls more than 1300 students, it has the feel of a much smaller school and, as one parent said, “It feels like family.” This feeling is due to the welcoming atmosphere generated by all members of the school community and the close personal attention paid to all of the students. Through the collection and good use of a variety of data, the school is able to meet the educational needs of the students. Special programs, utilizing diverse forms of data, help the staff to meet the needs of the school’s ethnically and academically diverse student population. Parents and teachers are extremely complimentary regarding the principal. She is viewed as approachable and accessible by the parents. Teachers view the feedback of her classroom visits as excellent professional development. Due to the extensive range and good use of data, the review’s evaluation of well-developed is more generous than the school’s own view that it is proficient in many aspects of its work.

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.

In addition to the formal data available from the City and State tests, the school generates a great deal of informal data that teachers and administrators use to monitor individual and class progress and to make decisions regarding curriculum and instructional strategies. Formal and informal individual student and class data are kept on a spreadsheet format to more efficiently and effectively display the information and facilitate teachers to see more easily common student strengths and areas for improvement. The spreadsheets are especially well developed for English Language arts, and to some degree mathematics. Summaries are prepared so administrators can gain a quick and easy overview of whole grade performance.

Staff at all levels use data well to monitor student progress. This is facilitated through the use of well-maintained teacher assessment binders that contain summary class data as well as data about the levels of specific skills of individual students. The binders are reviewed regularly by the principal and assistant principals. Teachers use the information contained in the binders daily to help plan and differentiate instruction. Records of individual reading progress, maintained by the teachers in the assessment binders, allow the teachers to examine student progress in terms of benchmark standards for grade level performance. So far the binders contain detailed data in English language arts and mathematics, but are in the development stage for science and social studies. The academic intervention team evaluates the needs of special education students and those not making adequate progress, and prescribes and monitors closely subsequent interventions for each student. The school checks the progress of gifted and talented students closely to make sure they are making the expected gains and to evaluate the

impact and effectiveness of the Beacon Program. Test data is disaggregated by gender, ethnicity and for English language learners so the school has an updated understanding of the performance and progress of these groups.

The school compares its performance each year to measure gains in student performance. It compares how well it is doing with similar schools. Teachers review data across classes during grade meetings, especially performance in English language arts and mathematics. Particular attention is given to comparing the relative performance of special education students and English language learners to evaluate the school's intervention programs.

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 Comprehensive Education Plan drives the work of the school well. It is collaboratively developed by the administration, coaches, members of the school leadership team, academic intervention services providers, science and social studies cluster teachers and the school secretary, who coordinates the process. A needs assessment survey is administered to parents and teachers to obtain their input regarding school priorities for the coming year. While the Comprehensive Education Plan includes long-term measures and clear timescales, not all action plan goals and objectives have the same definite measures and timelines to facilitate monitoring of their implementation and impact.

Through frequent review of their data, teachers and administrators identify students who are not making adequate academic progress. Identified students are referred to the weekly academic intervention team meeting, and the data reviewed. Recommendations for instructional interventions are made and regularly monitored for effectiveness. The school identifies students scoring at level 1 or 2 on the state assessments and those whose scores have slipped to offer additional supplementary instruction after school in English language arts and mathematics.

Teachers and administrators set high expectations for behavior and learning. Rubrics and regular feedback and conferences with teachers guide students' academic and personal development and identify their next steps for learning and behavior. Expectations are conveyed to parents who receive a great deal of information regarding the education of their children and about school activities. Teachers have regular contact with parents, frequently in the schoolyard. The parents of students bussed to the school are called to keep them updated on their children's progress and school events.

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 teachers and coaches have developed units of study to customize the mandated balanced literacy program to meet the needs of students in the school. The writing assessment and narrative developed by Teachers College have been modified to help

guide instruction. The characteristics of writing are listed so that progress in developing writing skills can be tracked for individual students and classes. In mathematics, the staff aligned the mandated Every Day Mathematics skills sequence with the performance indicators for the New York State mathematics assessment. A pacing calendar was developed to ensure that concepts that would be tested on the State exam would be taught before the test was taken. Interim assessments are administered three times to track student growth toward the State standards. Remediation groups are formed based on the results of these tests. The Beacon Program caters well, for gifted and talented students. Teachers are held accountable for student progress through frequent reviews of the teacher assessment binders and regular visits to and evaluations of classes. Teachers use the data, especially their conference notes, to identify student need and to plan well-differentiated instruction.

The school uses its budget highly effectively to support the instructional program. Examples include purchase of books in students' home languages and the purchase of academic intervention services. Staff time is effectively allocated, including academic support teachers, science and social studies cluster teachers. Reconfiguring the daily schedule has enabled staff to have common planning and professional development time.

Students are fully engaged in their learning as a result of the school's focus on meeting individual student needs. In particular, an additional and diverse range of enrichment programs engages gifted and talented students fully. For example, the Renzulli Learning Program, a web-based application, helps students learn about their own interests and talents and suggests sources for enrichment activities. Another, the school-wide Enrichment Model identifies student interests and talents and teams them once each week with a staff member skilled in painting, computer animation, photography and music.

Student attendance is a high priority, with calls made to the homes of absent students. Students with 100% attendance is celebrated with a certificate at the end of each semester. Teachers respect the students and parents and in turn are respected by them. The teachers know both the students' academic and personal needs very well, resulting in a high rate of trust between students and teachers.

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.

A human resources committee, involving teachers, parents and administrators screens teacher applicants using precise criteria, including knowledge of the mandated curriculum and an ability to use data. Prospective candidates are asked to bring portfolios with examples of student work and samples lesson plans to the selection interview. This process is effective in bringing teachers to the school who have strong content knowledge and who know how important it is to use data to match academic work to the needs of all students.

Professional development decisions are based on the needs of school development and on individual teacher needs for self-improvement. For example, coaches and administrators supported teachers on how to use the school's test practice materials most effectively in planning instruction. Workshops on improving instruction for English language learners and special education students are a constant focus. After school study

groups focus on particular teacher's needs. A cross-grade volunteer study group called 'the math cadre' continues to articulate the work of mathematics instruction across the grades, and serves as a vehicle for developing leadership in the school. New teachers are effectively supported, including a "buddy system". Teachers frequently visit colleagues' classrooms to share effective lessons and instructional strategies, The Teacher College professional development in literacy is especially effective as a support for new teachers. While teachers share their learning and notes from external professional development during grade level meetings, opportunities for teachers and administrators to turnkey information received to full faculty are less formally scheduled.

The principal and assistant principals visit classrooms frequently both formally and informally and provide good verbal and written feedback to teachers every month. Teachers find the feedback extremely helpful in reflecting and improving on their teaching practices. The principal and assistant principals are highly respected by the parents, students and teachers in the school community. Due to the effective leadership provided by the administrators and the constant involvement of teachers and support staff, the school runs exceptionally smoothly.

The school provides extensive youth development and support services through active engagement with the community. A Project Arts grant successfully infuses arts into the curriculum. An extensive after-school program is provided by the Greater Ridgewood Youth Council and a local councilman obtains financial support for school needs, such as additional computers.

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.

Administration effectively monitors the implementation of all action plans in the Comprehensive Education Plan. Summary reports provided by the respective sub-committees are reviewed during cabinet meetings and a summary of the findings are distributed to teachers. Long-term goals and objectives for each component of the plan are measurable, with specific timelines, but not all action plans have sufficient interim goals against which the school can measure its ongoing progress to evaluate whether it is on track to meet its goals.

Teachers effectively monitor student progress through maintenance of their assessment binders. Both individual student and whole class progress is documented, enabling the teachers to strategically plan and differentiate instruction. Comparison of student progress across classrooms is a frequent topic in grade meetings. The administration utilizes the many informal assessment results to monitor the progress by grade groups.

When reviewed data reveals a need for revision, adjustments are made in the respective curriculum, program or instruction. The culture of planning in the school ensures that data is frequently reviewed in a collaborative manner and when necessary adjustments are made to ensure that the needs of all students are met. The outcomes of each year's evaluation and review are used as benchmarks for each successive year's goals and objectives.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Maspeth Elementary School (PS 153)	∅	✓	+
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