



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Fresh Meadow Public School

Public School 173

**174-10 67 Avenue
Queens
NY 11365**

Principal: Molly Wang

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Reviewer: Corinne Brown

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Fresh Meadow School provides education for 776 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. This year has seen the start of two half day pre-kindergarten programs. Many of the students are first generation Americans with 62.5% of Asian background. In addition there are 25.7% White students, 8.75% Hispanic and 2.7% Black. Over a dozen different languages are spoken by the families of students, predominantly Chinese and Russian other than English. Ten percent of students are English language learners. Special education students account for 3% of the school population and are taught in two self-contained classes. The school is not Title 1 eligible.

The principal has been at the school for three years and has focused primarily on improving instruction and attendance. Attendance is 96% which is significantly above the average of similar and City-wide schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal, ably supported by the assistant principal, provides a safe, caring and stimulating learning environment.
- The principal provides strong leadership with clear aims to ensure quality instruction.
- The school makes excellent use of data to match the needs of students and enable accelerated progress and high performance.
- The school has a collaborative and supportive working culture among students and staff.
- The school values, and has an open access policy towards, parents, keeping them fully informed and involved.
- The school and parents have together achieved and maintained students' excellent attendance.
- The school sets clear expectations of behavior and provides clear guidelines and indicators for progress.
- All members of the school community demonstrate respect for each other and work together for the common good.
- The school provides a calm atmosphere where effort is rewarded.
- Students achieve high levels of academic and personal development, enabling them to become effective future citizens.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve and expand the science program across all grades to include the provision of a science laboratory when the budget allows.
- Maintain an up-to-date website, to benefit the school community and to allow for information exchange.
- Develop the library to include books indicated by reading level and further develop it as a resource base and multi-media center.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The open door policy of this school ensures welcoming and supportive relationships among all members of the school community and underpins the learning for all students. Clear expectations are set and a sense of pride is shared by all. Strong links with home ensure a consistency of approach and exchange of information, ensuring each student is supported in making the best possible progress. A high emphasis is placed on attendance which results in over 96% daily attendance. Data is used effectively to tailor programs to individual needs, including special education students, high achievers and English language learners.

Teachers know their students well and sensitively exercise professional judgment in addition to data analysis. The collaborative approach to planning, evaluation and revision of teaching and learning at all levels is a significant feature which contributes not only to the academic success of the students but is also professionally supportive for staff.

The parents are very appreciative that the school embraces them and they feel they share in their child's education. They are pleased to be trusted and invited to take part in lessons and workshops conducted by the parent coordinator or teachers.

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

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

The school effectively uses a variety of ways, both formal and informal, to tailor learning to the needs of the individual. Excellent use is made by all teaching staff of available standardized test results data, which are included in rigorously maintained and detailed portfolios. Progress is carefully tracked through tools such as running records, conference notes and miscue analysis to adapt an individual's program of study. Any significant anomalies are discussed in the regular grade review meetings after which remedial action is taken. Grade teachers also have informal opportunities to review progress during their weekly shared preparation and planning periods.

Staff analyze not only individual, but also class and grade test results. Particular care is taken to track the progress of English language learners and special education students, ensuring that all students are making similarly good progress. The school addresses the needs of the higher achieving students, especially in English language arts and mathematics. Teachers of subjects such as social studies, drama, music and science assess student progress in their area and keep accurate records, contributing to the understanding of individual achievement.

The principal, assistant principal and cabinet have a thorough understanding of the school performance relative to similar schools and of achievement as it relates to gender, ethnicity and ability groups. They track progress over time through reference to all available data and interpret the information accurately in order to inform planning, resourcing and decision making.

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 developed organizational structures that encourage collaborative working in developing goals for curriculum and assessment. The Teachers College units of study have been adopted to guide reading and writing, with teachers empowered to adapt units. Teachers College trainers in school model and support all teachers. The literacy coach is part of the Teachers College leadership team and English as a second language and special education teachers are an integral part of the Teachers College training program. This consistency of approach aids collaborative development of group and individual programs and goals. Similarly the mathematics coach participates in training, grade meetings and planning. Professional development days offer opportunities to discuss individual progress with the academic intervention service and special education specialists. The professional development framework is centered on improving instruction as the key means of accelerating student progress. Meetings are well led and purposeful, make good use of data analysis to focus on the best ways to help each student achieve.

The school’s intervention programs are carefully planned and monitored, with academic intervention services provided during the day, the extended day and Saturday Academy. Detailed analysis of needs and continual revision of instruction make a real difference to students in greatest need. An effective after school program for English language learners is also in place. A running commentary of “Organize for Effort” encourages every child to succeed and aim higher, also setting the expectation of parents.

The school communicates clearly and continually with parents regarding their child’s progress and involves them in support. All communications from school are translated as required and parents appreciate the open channels of communication and sense of involvement.

Within the classroom there are clear indicators for progress so that students are continually aware of their goals. Students are able to help others and to develop interpersonal and leadership qualities through a monitor system, which is clearly effective

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.

Although the school is not mandated to follow City programs of study, the standards are used as a guide in planning the whole school curriculum and the school also focuses on learning experiences that actively engage students. The adoption of the Teachers' College model for literacy has seen benefits across the school, offering a unified and easily understandable methodology. Teachers take accountability seriously and feel empowered through membership of committees which review and feedback to the principal or assistant principal. Teachers make good use of all available information to appropriately differentiate and personalize learning within their classes. With teaching methodologies embedded, mutual planning and support is encouraged among staff. Turnkeys, staff who have attended appropriate courses externally, help by training colleagues in school, impacting positively upon student achievement.

Budgeting has taken account of the all above work and the appointment of a staff developer for mathematics has enhanced the already good results. Financial restraints have imposed limits on the use of substitute teachers to allow training, as well as the expansion or adoption of ideas already in mind. Careful budgeting has seen much needed expansion of resources within the classroom, and the introduction of social studies, drama and arts, which is appreciated by other staff and enjoyed by the very engaged students. The school next step is to expand science provision to include a laboratory and to develop the library as a learning multi-media resource base, with materials indicated by reading level.

Attendance is a high priority for the school community. There is no complacency despite consistently above average attendance figures. These high figures are the result of an effective attendance plan, tracking and incentives, plus the appointment of an attendance aide. Behavior expectations are explicit for students and parents and this is another successful area for the school. Students appreciate the concern that all staff show them and know who to turn to should they have a problem.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

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

The principal and assistant principal are fully involved in the selection and assignment of high quality staff with definite selection criteria including demonstration lessons and student feedback. They utilize staff strengths and support professional development if required. To enable an overview, both frequently visit classes and instruct, so they have a realistic picture of actual learning. A detailed, formal professional development plan is in place, complemented by peer support through meetings and observations, which are strongly encouraged. Staff have a good sense of team work and feel that they are valued and supported. The professional development plan is clearly linked to instruction and the programs of study in school, as well as the goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan. Additional training is also brought in, such as consultants for specific skills like phonemic awareness or comprehension. Evaluation of professional development is systematic and takes account of feedback from staff, formal and informal classroom observation by the administration and student need. The principal would like to expand the teacher study group idea, embracing both professional development and mutual support.

The principal is held in high regard by staff for her calm decisive leadership, clear communication and vision, empowerment of teachers and sensitive handling of the budget.

Clear systems are firmly embedded into the day to day routines of the school to ensure that everything runs smoothly. Staff, students and parents are pleased that the principal and assistant principal will listen to them with flexibility of response. It is appreciated also that the principal involves the wider community, such as in inviting high school mentors to work with students after school, particularly English language learners, on self esteem, homework and other skills. Parents and caregivers value the high standards the principal has set, her strong regard for the safety, wellbeing and learning of their children. This is seen in very high attendance figures at parent conferences and in positive support from the parent-teacher association.

The school has also established strong links with outside institutions, community organizations and other external agencies for the benefit of staff and students. A ballroom dance program has captured the interest of all students and parents; an exciting example of innovative community involvement.

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.

The school has well-developed structures in place for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year. These continue to evolve as the quality of data analysis is increasingly rigorous. Each student is formally assessed for reading and mathematics at the end of the school year, with data passed on to the next teacher as well as added to the student's portfolio. Every student is also re-assessed upon return to school in September. Consistency is assured through use of the same assessment instrument throughout the school. Formal and informal teacher observations, reading assessment records, lessons plans and conferencing notes encourage the analysis of data to plan and set goals and to differentiate instruction.

Grade level meetings, professional development sessions and informal meetings, close communication with home and other professionals such as the academic intervention serviced or specialists in teaching English language learners all ensure that the school flexibly tailors instruction to individual need, using hard and soft data. Literacy is taught well in all clusters. Through use of trainers, consultants and coaches to assist administrators and teachers in planning, the school is able to effectively implement the Comprehensive Education Plan.

Effective monitoring and revision of plans at all levels enable students of all abilities to achieve personal and academic success at The Fresh Meadow School, building good foundations for becoming effective citizens of the future. All members of the school community demonstrate respect for each other in a calm working atmosphere which rewards effort and where all work together for the common good.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Fresh Meadow Public School (PS 173)	∅	✓	+
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