



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

William Sidney Mount School

Public School 174

**65-10 Dieterle Crescent
Queens
NY 11374**

Principal: Karin Kelly

Dates of review: November 27 - 29, 2006

Reviewer: Ronnie Solow

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 174 is located in the Rego Park section of Queens. This pre-kindergarten through 6th grade school serves a population of approximately 600 students from culturally diverse backgrounds. Around 37% of the students are White, 4.4 % are Black, 16.6% are Hispanic and 41.5% are Asian and other backgrounds. The community is home to many new immigrants from Asia and the Middle East. Special education students account for nearly 12% of the student population which has in addition 14.5% English language learners. Attendance is 94.8% which matches the average of similar and City-wide schools. The school does not receive Title 1 funding.

The building operates at 106 % capacity with transportables in the schoolyard housing four classes.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides strong leadership skills within a warm, caring and nurturing environment that involves all members of the school community.
- The principal promotes academic rigor, collaborative relationships and accountability for all.
- The building is richly decorated with student work and artifacts that demonstrate a high quality of learning.
- Students are well known to staff across classes and grade levels.
- Continuous monitoring of student outcomes and learning, with timely adjustments, contribute to high academic outcomes.
- Pedagogy and curriculum are personalized to meet the individual needs and interests of the students.
- The school has a culture of continuous improvement and high expectations for all.
- The staff has formed a professional, collaborative community that supports one another in their personal and professional growth and development.
- Professional development is personalized according to need, interest and experience as determined by staff surveys and questionnaires.
- Data is continually reviewed to address the individual needs, strengths and interests of the students within each class and grade to determine the need for supplemental services.

What the school needs to improve

- Follow through with plans to support the effective functioning of the parent association, school leadership team and student government bodies.
- Develop further opportunities for staff to share knowledge, skills, and expertise.
- Establish a protocol for teachers and student teachers to use in collaborative planning.
- Extend students' ability to set personal goals, evaluate outcomes, judge their progress and locate assistance when required.
- Provide additional enrichment for students performing above grade level.
- Expand the use of technology as a teaching and learning tool.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

In the few months since her appointment the principal has begun to put her mark on the school. While the school was already performing at a high level, she instituted a program that allows the teachers to have small class size and common planning periods every day. The atmosphere is warm and the building is beautifully maintained and decorated with student work throughout all the corridors. Teachers, the assistant principal, and parents give her high marks for being a caring, reflective educator with a great deal of knowledge about literacy and early childhood learning.

The team approach to assisting students to reach their maximum potential is a main strength. The principal and assistant principal work as a team, providing mutual support. They know the students well and can provide detailed information about any student at any given moment. The pupil personnel team, the grade teams, and the special education staff provide additional resources and help to add to the cohesiveness of the staff. The teachers, secretaries, aides and paraprofessionals state they feel lucky to work at the school. The students are always the focus of what they do every day.

The principal has begun to address a number of issues and has plans in place to support a fully effective parent association, school leadership team, and student government. She is a reflective practitioner and knows her school, her community, and her students very well.

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 principal and staff utilize many kinds of data to inform decisions regarding programs, curriculum, school performance outcomes and cohorts of students. City and State test results, Princeton Review interim assessments in English language arts and mathematics, Teacher's College Reading and Writing Workshop conference notes, and teacher-made assessments are regularly reviewed at grade-level and faculty meetings.

The literacy and mathematics coaches are available to staff to assist in curriculum planning, modifications and lesson planning. Using the data from tests, the literacy coach provides a breakdown of skills acquired by each student in the class to guide grouping of students. Every teacher has a data binder filled with information about their class and grade and this serves as the basis of much of the teacher talk that occurs at the daily common planning period for each grade. Conference notes and running records are used with students when discussing daily work and serve as the basis for much of the in-class planning. Data regarding the performance of special education students and English language learners is closely monitored and regularly discussed with the pupil personnel team. The classroom teacher is always included in the monitoring process.

The school is aware of the performance of students in various groups, for example gender and ethnicity, but there is more emphasis on the performance of individuals than of groups.

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.

Every grade has a daily common preparation period during which teachers plan based on student performance data including the Princeton Review interim assessments, teacher made tests and conference notes created in the classroom meetings between teacher and student. Cross-class groups are formed to address individual needs.

Individual student needs are accommodated within a wide range of support. The pupil personnel team is especially diligent in its use of data when discussing at-risk students. The team carefully evaluate the interventions they have prescribed, making the necessary adjustments to ensure their success. A similar system for English language learners takes into account the implications of the language barriers for instruction. A tiered structure of intervention services is offered to support students who are struggling. The pupil personnel team is involved with both teachers and students. Special education staff provide supplemental instruction in small groups after school for those students in need of additional support. Push-in support is evident throughout the day in the classrooms.

The parent coordinator runs workshops in the mornings, evenings and on week-ends to keep parents informed about what is going on in the school and their child’s classroom, to enable them to support the school’s high expectations. She disseminates a monthly newsletter that is sent home by backpack and e-mailed to more than 300 families. Many parents engage in informal discussions with the principal, assistant principal and teachers in the school yard, lunchroom and hallways of the school. Problems, concerns and issues can be addressed quickly.

Parents have attended workshops to help them access Princeton Review material on-line in order to assist their children. Older texts and materials are sent home with students for parents to use with their children in both reading and mathematics. Last year, the parent association was disbanded due to an administrative problem. It has recently been reestablished, along with the school leadership team. The principal is working with both groups to overcome any further problems and to assist the association to prosper and flourish for the benefit of the school.

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 school has opted to follow the Teachers’ College Reading and Writing Workshop program, as well as Everyday Mathematics. These and additional programs are aligned with the City and State requirements. Additional supplemental materials are available for each classroom. Teachers request materials for curriculum customization and these are ordered with the approval of the principal. Coaches spend most of their time in the

classrooms assisting teachers, leading small groups and modeling strategies that are used in the workshop model. The use of technology to support teaching and learning is not yet well established.

Students work diligently and assist one another when the teacher is occupied with another student. Work is given which usually challenges them at the right level, although there is not always enough extension work for higher-achieving students. Student work is proudly displayed throughout the school and in the classrooms, and has feedback which shows students what they need to do to improve. In the special education classroom, students are held to the same high standards of learning. Teachers speak quietly and use positive words during interactions with individual students and the class. All students edit and rework samples of their writing and keep detailed journals. Students are not involved enough in setting their own goals.

Budget, scheduling and staffing decisions take into account student needs, based on the analysis of data, and the recommendations of the school leadership team. For example, teachers requested small class size, common preparation periods across grades and time for grade conferences during the school day. A new school schedule, utilizing the cluster teachers to take over in the classrooms during the grade meeting time, enabled these requests to be instituted.

Students are well known to staff, and the mutual trust between them means that students are confident that they will be helped and supported. Attendance is monitored daily. Each child receives a phone call on the first day of absence and a parent or doctor's note is required upon return to school. A Russian-speaking guidance counselor and Chinese-speaking parent coordinator assist in these efforts.

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 school administration supports the staff in many ways. The principal has created an instructional and administrative handbook that includes school policies, regulations, calendars and safety guides. This contributes to the safe and orderly environment of the school and its smooth running. The principal is well respected for her knowledge of literacy, teaching and learning, and her administrative ability.

The principal has had little opportunity to hire staff. The staff view her as supportive, encouraging and nurturing. Teachers are empowered to further develop their own capacity and to assist in the expansion of their colleagues' skills. The teaching staff have been successfully encouraged to have high expectations for all students.

Professional development arises from the expressed needs of the staff. In addition, school walk-throughs provided information on which to base the professional development plan for 2006-2007. The literacy coach, Teachers' College trainers and the mathematics coach help to translate these expressed needs into practice. Professional development takes place in the classrooms via inter-class visitations, inter-school visits, summer training institutes, conferences and scheduled City-wide professional development days. Formal classroom observations are a further opportunity for professional development. Prior to the classroom visit, the principal and teacher discuss the teacher's personal goals and

expectations. After the classroom visit, the principal provides positive feedback and an area for development.

The common preparation period encourages accountable teacher talk as well as the sharing of lesson materials and teacher-made charts. Teachers regularly visit one another's classrooms. Data binders, conference notes, student journals and logs are visible in the classrooms and regularly used. There is currently no protocol to facilitate collaborative planning.

In addition to the Teachers College Leadership Program, staff members attend conferences and seminars that interest them. Regularly scheduled professional development activities are also attended by the designated staff members. Sharing of the gained knowledge and materials takes place at the faculty and grade meetings.

Local politicians and others in the neighborhood are actively involved in the school. The school has also developed a wide range of partnerships for the students' and teachers' benefit.

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 ability to set goals and revise plans in order to achieve academic goals is demonstrated throughout the school. One example is the revision in teaching the poetry unit by the grade 4 and 5 teachers when the Princeton interim assessment results indicated weaker performance by these students. The most recent science results are currently being examined for indications of strengths and weaknesses by grade and class. Once complete, appropriate strategies will be developed, put into practice and monitored by the principal and assistant principal.

The principal, assistant principal, teaching staff and parents have frequent conversations about how to raise achievement levels. Reading logs are reviewed five times per year beginning in September. Princeton Assessments results are evaluated three times per year.

The principal undertook an internal longitudinal study of her students. This indicated that grade 4 students were performing at a high level 4, and then began to drop off in grade 6 to low level 4. Further tracking and investigation is planned to see if this trend continues for the 2006-2007 school year and beyond. An item analysis on the English language arts and mathematics test results is planned to indicate areas to highlight for extra attention across grades.

Teachers have data binders and use them in the classroom and to determine student needs. Each teacher has the most current information as well as the data from the past school year so that comparisons can be made about progress, strengths and weaknesses. The data serves as a benchmark for planning for each student, class and grade. Note of the goals and objectives are included in the Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal's performance review. School staff are involved in the creation of these documents and work conscientiously to see that they are implemented and the goals achieved.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: William Sidney Mount School (PS 174)	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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