



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Christopher A. Santora School

Public School 222

**86-15 37 Jackson Heights,
Queens,
NY 11372**

Principal: Ms. Maria Ciccone

Dates of review: May 21- 22, 2007

Reviewer: Mrs. Sue Alton

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Christopher A. Santora School is a pre-K through two elementary school with 313 students enrolled. Of the students, 75% are Hispanic, 10% Asian Pacific Islander, 14% White and 1% Black. The proportion of students who are newly arrived in the country is 9%. Of these, 2.3% are from Columbia, 2.3% from Ecuador and 1.3% from Bangladesh.

Just over 3% are special education students and 24% are English language learners. The school receives Title 1 funding with 73% of students eligible. This is significantly less than for similar and City schools. Attendance is 94.5%, which is higher than similar, and City schools.

The school opened in 2002 with a magnet grant award under the title “The Early Childhood Magnet School of Exploration”. There is a focus on literacy and languages through the arts.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision for the school and is very well assisted by her cabinet.
- Professional development programs are very well planned and staff value these opportunities to develop their skills.
- The school is a calm, orderly environment, where students are happy and eager to learn.
- The school provides an enriching curriculum, which motivates all students.
- There are very good opportunities for students to become involved in practical and creative activities, which enhance their learning very well.
- Relationships between the school and support agencies are very good and there is a clear focus on improving outcomes for students.
- Dual language classes provide very good opportunities for students to learn English and Spanish.
- The support students receive outside the classroom from academic intervention services is effective.
- Parents hold the school in high regard and value the encouragement and support they receive from the principal.
- Procedures to encourage high attendance are very good.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop practical procedures to formally planned, monitored and evaluated teaching and learning within each class to ensure it matches the different needs of each student or group.
- Establish more opportunities for grade teams to consider comparisons of students' progress across classes and grades and to evaluate results and revise goals.
- Ensure that strategic plans contain measurable interim and long-term goals for groups and grades with clear timescales for evaluating, monitoring and recording progress.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal and her cabinet have a clear vision for all students to achieve and to enjoy a range of practical and creative activities to enhance learning. The school continually seeks new ways to improve learning, for example, dual language classes and cross curricula themes. Professional development has a high profile and relates closely to the needs of the school and the individual needs of the staff. The school works very well with a range of partners and organizations to focus on improving students' achievement further.

The school's focus on using data to improve achievement is recent. The principal is aware that teachers need to focus more specifically on using data to differentiate activities within the classroom. Also, that grade teams need to be involved more formally in the review of progress. However, the school has made an effective start at introducing new systems and focusing on staff development.

The Comprehensive Education Plan identifies aims and goals for the school. However, plans do not always contain quantifiable interim and long-term goals. There are not yet clear timescales and processes for the monitoring and evaluation of progress towards the school's stated goals.

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.

The gathering and using data to evaluate and track performance is new for many teachers. However, following training, most teachers now track the progress of their students using data generated by the school's systems. The process for recording this information varies, from teacher to teacher, and does not always focus precisely on what the information shows. The principal and cabinet use data effectively to evaluate the performance of individual students, classes and grades. The resulting information is used as the basis for discussion with teachers and to identify intervention and support strategies.

The school has a clear picture of the performance of different ethnic groups, English language learners and special education students. It monitors the progress of other groups such as those who are gifted and talented and gender groups. This information is used to provide intervention, support or enhancement activities. For example, the school identified that boys under-achieved and took action by purchasing boy-friendly resources and increasing the amount of practical activities in lessons.

Dual language teaching effectively develops the skills of students in their home language, while learning another. Data shows that the students in these classes make more progress than those in monolingual classes.

The principal and cabinet compare achievement across classes, grades and subjects, using information from data and student portfolios. The principal and key teachers maintain an overview of differences between subjects. There is little comparison possible against other schools because insufficient data is available for this age group generally.

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 proficient.

The school is aware that it needs to analyze data more closely to identify specific goals for each student and each class. The principal and her cabinet work collaboratively to plan objective goals for improvement, which form part of the Comprehensive Education Plan. However, these goals lack sufficient challenge as they are the same for each grade and the target for each student is set at achieving the level for their grade. The goals in the plan relate to the end of each year and review is neither scheduled at interim points nor recorded systematically.

The mathematics coach has analyzed in detail the students’ strengths and weaknesses in understanding, across the curriculum. This information is used to identify support programs. The school plans to extend this evaluation to other programs.

The teachers meet at the start of the year to agree instructional goals. They discuss evaluations, programs to be used and the professional development needed. In setting goals, teachers know the expected standards, but this information is not used consistently to create different tasks or short-term goals for individual students or groups.

The school has high expectations for its students and aims for all to graduate. The class teachers and cabinet track the students’ progress to graduation and identify where intervention strategies are needed. The progress of pupils in greatest need is carefully tracked, with the pupil personnel team and academic intervention services particularly effective in this. They maintain systematic records, which they keep under regular review.

The school works closely with parents. The parents express confidence in the school and praise its high expectations. They value the school’s flexible arrangements for meetings with them and the opportunities to share information about their children. They particularly appreciate the bi-lingual skills of almost all of the teachers. Some parents would like more opportunities for informal contact in the daytime, including helping in classrooms and further opportunities in the “Learning Leader” programs, which provide opportunities for training to work in 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 proficient.

Magnet Schools can, select their own educational themes. The school has chosen literacy and languages through the arts and exploratory learning as its thematic approach to learning. In line with its themes, the school is very well resourced and has a wide range of

technology. It has trialed innovative approaches to the curriculum, including working closely with artists and a recent 'Curriculum Fair project'. These activities significantly improve motivation, enhance learning, and develop students' speaking and listening skills.

Teaching and learning in lessons is not always carefully planned to ensure that all students work at levels appropriate to their abilities. In most lessons, planning, expectations and activities are the same for all students. There are no grade leaders to institute more regular reviews of students' progress across classes and grades. In practice, such reviews depend largely on informal discussion between teachers. As a result, there is little formal recording of evaluation of or revisions to goals, programs of work or lesson plans.

The school's needs drives budgeting decisions and focuses on quality resources that engage students in the classroom and on teachers' professional development. As one parent said of the principal, "She's a wizard with money. She can make a dollar do the work of ten!"

Staffing decisions are determined from an analysis of data as for example, the hiring of bilingual teachers. Scheduling decisions are made carefully, to allow for example, cross-curricular activities to support improvements to students' speaking and listening skills.

The students enjoy school and respect their teachers. They are particularly enthusiastic about the opportunities they have to visit other places or take part in practical activities such as those provided following the curriculum fair.

There are effective systems to track attendance and respond to absences. As a result, attendance is very good and above that of similar and City schools.

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 staff are hired on the skills and licenses they hold, which are relevant to the students' needs. Professional Development is a strength of the school and all teachers value the training they receive to improve their practice. The use of data to improve teaching features prominently in the professional development of all staff. The teachers receive a very effective program of professional development from the Teachers' College. For example, a recent focus on the analysis and assessment of students' writing has helped teachers to plan future lessons.

The principal frequently observes lessons and provides formal feedback on strengths and areas for development. The latter are supported by good suggestions for professional development. She has a clear understanding of effective teaching for this age group and provides constant support and guidance to staff. The teachers modeling lessons and observe one another informally in a spirit of mutual improvement.

The evaluation of results and development planning is led by the principal and cabinet. They identify trends and issues and plan action with teachers. The teachers meet with the principal each term to discuss their students' progress.

The principal is well respected by students and parents. They value her approachability, availability and knowledge. She works effectively to develop staff and to raise

achievement further. She understands the quality of instruction across the school and observes teaching systematically, to evaluate strengths and plan improvement.

The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. However, scheduling can be disrupted, due to the school's enthusiasm to provide a range of opportunities and activities for students. These often necessitate inconvenient last minute changes to the schedule.

Partnerships with outside organizations such as theatre groups and artists contribute very well to students' learning. Relationships between the school and support agencies are very good and focus strongly on improving outcomes for students. The parents and students value these opportunities highly.

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 undeveloped

The principal, school cabinet and leadership team collaborate to produce the Comprehensive Education Plan, with other staff invited to contribute. Priorities for the year are identified following analysis of achievement data. However, targets are recorded as an overall goal for grades K through two, rather than differentiated goals for each grade to more accurately reflect the latest position for students' achievement. These goals are quantifiable, but some are related to the experiences and opportunities students will be offered rather than their achievement. There is no formal review process, to check progress towards targets in the Comprehensive Education Plan, until it is rewritten in the following year. Other plans describe what needs to be done, but are not always clear about their goals. The principal knows that all plans need improvement to identify for clearly the measurable interim and long-term goals for groups and grades. The school needs to establish timescales for evaluating, monitoring and recording progress.

The evaluation of the impact of programs for those students, who receive additional support from academic intervention services and other agencies, is very effective. The teachers analyze the individual progress of students to identify intervention programs. However, there are no formalized opportunities for grade teams to be involved in comparisons of student progress, evaluating results and planning for improvement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Christopher A. Santora (PS 222)	∅	✓	+
Overall 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		