



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Emanuel Kaplan School**

**Public School 229**

**67 - 25 51 Road  
Queens  
NY 11377**

**Principal: Dr Sibylle Ajwani**

**Dates of review: April 25 – 27, 2007**

**Reviewer: Stephanie Krusa**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Emanuel Kaplan School has 1,263 students enrolled in classes from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. Students with individual education plans make up almost 12% of the student body. The school has been barrier free since the 1980's and houses 4 classes of special education students who require adaptive physical education, occupational and physical therapy services. In addition, the school has five cooperative team teaching classrooms at kindergarten, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th grades, and four self-contained special education classes at kindergarten, 2nd, 3rd and 5th grades. The school has self contained accelerated classes at grades 4, 5 and 6.

English language learners make up 14% of enrollment, significantly above that of similar schools yet on a par with City enrollments. Students recently arrived in the country and who are new English language learners are from Colombia, Mexico and China.

Hispanic students make up 38% of the student body, just over 2% are Black, Asian students represent almost 31% and 29% are White.

With 51% of students eligible for free or reduced lunch, the school does not receive Title 1 funding. Attendance for this year stands at 94.6% which is above that of City and similar schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is a highly effective instructional leader, providing consistent and strategic support for students, parents and staff.
- Available data is collected and new data generated and analyzed to assess the effectiveness of instruction, of the curriculum, and to continually improve the academic program.
- The school effectively monitors progress of students at risk of not meeting the standard, working closely with teachers and providers to provide flexible and personalized opportunities for students to grow.
- The school has a model inclusion program that seamlessly blends general and special education students and staff.
- The staff communicates high expectations for all students and nurtures well the academic, social and emotional dimensions of each.
- Students are totally engaged in studies and feel well supported, valued and challenged by staff.
- This is a community of learners where all staff work collegially to pool resources and share best practices.
- Classroom management and instruction are uniformly excellent and all staff work together to ensure a calm, focused and safe learning community.

### Areas for Improvement

- Strengthen the collaborative process for setting long- and short-term instructional goals with staff to drive plans for improvement for specific groups of students.
- Establish processes for building future capacity to sustain the excellent differentiated instruction.
- Continue to build access to innovative technology to enhance the instructional program.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well-developed school.**

This is a very high performing school with clear lines of communication and established systems which successfully ground all areas of governance. The principal's doctoral research on academic interventions and statistics is clearly evident in the school's proactive and effective use of data. The systematic analysis of student data can be seen in consistent improvement in achievement across grades and for nearly all groups in 2005-2006 in English language arts and mathematics. The school has a model inclusion program, with students in general education and special education classrooms engaged in cooperative learning and enrichment activities culminating in presentations and celebrations for peers, parents and community members. All staff are cooperatively involved, on and across grades, in improving instruction. All actively participate in a range of professional development opportunities matched well to personnel and the school's needs evidenced in data from formal and informal assessments. Instructional and enrichment programs undergo continuous scrutiny, with curriculum being revised as appropriate during the year, and rewritten each spring based on student results. The school's climate is positive and upbeat. Students, parents and staff all express enthusiasm for the school's interdisciplinary academic program and feel supported and valued in their respective roles. The school evaluated itself as proficient in most aspects. The review judges all aspects to be well-developed.

### 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 is highly proactive in collecting and analyzing data from State tests, and from its own wide range of assessments. This process is expertly supported by the data manager who works closely with the administrative team to build an understanding of trends and anomalies when viewed against results for this and similar schools. Systematic, two-way communication between administration and teachers ensures that all have updated information about the school-wide picture, and the progress of individual students and groups. Teachers meet regularly with the data manager and coaches to study overall trends and to compare their classroom results with others. Reading, writing and math conference binders assess individual student progress and ensure teachers have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of what each student knows and can do. Binders contain test histories so progress in class can be compared to test performance and any anomalies investigated. The Headsprout Program supplements the school's literacy program, in part, because built in assessments provide very specific additional information about the progress of individual students and classes. Teachers continuously review and update individual education plans to keep a close watch on its special

education students. Data is analyzed closely for trends and patterns in the performance of ethnic groups, boys and girls, English language learners and special education students.

The school compares how well it is doing against similar and City schools. Due to its barrier free environment, it pays particular attention to how well its special education student population is doing. Through close comparison between subjects for different groups, the school recognized that the gap between boys and girls achievement was widening and so implemented action that has started to close the gap and improve the achievement of both 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.**

Careful data analysis results in effective goal setting, a process guided by the school’s Comprehensive Education Plan and overseen by the administration. As a barrier free school, it accommodates a wider than customary range of students, but in this open community all students and staff share resources and participate fully in reviewing and setting goals for all aspects of school life. Goals focus on promoting improvement in the achievement of all students. Action plans focus on the aspects that the data identifies as most in need of improvement and detail who will do what and by when. Plans are in place for each subject by grade, for cohorts and for some groups in and across grades, with clear goals and timeframes for assessing student progress and evaluating achievement. Though systems are in place for flexible and timely goal setting, and the school knows which groups of students are not performing as well as others, instructional goals are not always aligned for all sub-groups needing to make faster progress.

The stable and focused staff consistently use the wide range of data they collect to set objectively measurable goals for each student and align instruction effectively in reading, writing and mathematics. Rubrics created for each unit of work help students and teachers assess how well each individual is doing and to monitor progress towards achieving personal goals.

The school’s model inclusion program ensures students who need most support to learn are taught alongside their peers. Interventions reflect careful attention to individual needs and are monitored and revised as students progress to ensure they continue to give the support required. This is clearly evident in the school’s annual participation in Empire State Games for the physically challenged. Teachers volunteer their weekend to accompany participants and a large contingent of students and parents attend to cheer on and assist student athletes and their families.

High expectations are held for all students, evident in the challenging goals set within a rigorous curriculum and in the school’s emphasis on students’ managing their own learning. Students and parents work with staff to share information, track results and to gain an understanding of how day-to-day work supports progress toward goals. For example, all 1<sup>st</sup> grade students participate in the Headsprout Early Reading program, an internet-based intervention program. Subsequent key goals identified for the emergent reader are discussed and shared with students and parents. Students monitor and chart their own progress on class boards, and so can discuss the significance of their own results and explain the tasks they have mastered for each level they have reached.

**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 developed curriculum maps that cover all content areas. These align with City and State mandates and effectively dovetail with overall plans for student improvement. In close collaboration with Teachers College, the school has developed instructional units incorporating research proven practices in literacy. The school has historically woven fine arts into the interdisciplinary curriculum which is further enhanced by performing arts programs offered in collaboration with Midori Music, Ballet Hispanico and American Ballroom Theater, among others. The school has started to use technology more effectively as a teaching tool and action plans detail how it is being used increasingly in all subjects to support learning.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are linked closely to strategic planning and fully support school plans for improved outcomes for individuals and all groups. The organization of learning for special education students is especially strong. A generous grant has provided updated computer equipment, and cafeteria, auditorium and library upgrades are scheduled.

There is a uniformly high level of differentiation of instruction at each grade, with constant efforts to refine strategies and techniques to match student needs. The Schoolwide Enrichment Model was implemented this year in selected classrooms to engage students in project-based learning which capitalizes on their interests while building self esteem. Students are enthusiastic about their studies and readily explain the purpose of work. They take charge of, and keep track of their own learning by self-managing their portfolios, assessing their work, selecting best samples and reflecting on the progress each shows. In addition, choice is embedded in many activities, giving students the power and responsibility to make decisions about their learning. Students recognize that teachers are willing and able to challenge and support them. They express confidence to ask for help and guidance about their work or personal concerns. They enjoy being in school reflected in their good and improving attendance, an aspect that the school monitors rigorously.

**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 is well respected as a forward thinking instructional leader who understands how to structure and manage growth. She regularly conducts formal and informal teacher observations and gives feedback designed to assist each teacher in perfecting practices which align to student needs and lead to continuous school improvement. In order to build capacity to assist students who struggle despite interventions, four staff recently completed training to learn more about how the brain works. The school is well run with established and effective routines and procedures in place.

The staff is stable and highly collegial. Faculty and grade level meetings are structured to focus on building common understanding about best practices. Staff works collaboratively to assess the impact of instructional plans and make timely adjustments, reflecting student

needs. Since the school has a strong data focus, primary criteria for new teachers are an understanding of the value and use of data and comfort in the use of technology. Teacher candidates must also demonstrate high expectations for students, content knowledge, be familiar with best practices and be open to ongoing professional development.

Professional development focuses on perfecting best practices which are already in place, including evermore sophisticated use of data to define needs and sustain the excellent differentiated instruction. In addition, the school is at the forefront of development of best practices in literacy. Teachers support each other through intervisitations, modeling and peer conferencing. The principal participates in two networks to support her own professional growth and frequently invites colleagues from other schools to watch demonstration lessons so that she and her staff can learn from the reflective comments of other school administrators.

Numerous effective partnerships support the school's work. In collaboration with the After School Corporation and the Maspeth Town Hall, the school provides an extended-day program with tutoring and homework assistance, as well as dance, fine arts, computer and recreational activities. The school receives support for its literacy programs and professional development from many universities and colleges.

**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 action plans and goals in the schools Comprehensive Education Plan are monitored rigorously and systematically throughout the year by the school leadership team and cabinet members to assess progress toward benchmarks. Plans and goals are realigned to ongoing analysis of student data but persistent achievement gaps for some groups, though improving, require constant diligence. Several initiatives which specifically target these gaps have been implemented, including Wilson Reading, Foundations, Great Leaps, Headsprout and Reading Plus, with ongoing teacher training planned to build implementation of these key interventions. Each year the school conducts a formal review of its work and future goals build on the outcomes of the previous year's evaluation.

Staff regularly review student progress in relation to similar and City schools and carefully analyze student progress on and across grades, and for classes on each grade, to ascertain effective practices and pinpoint areas of instruction that require strengthening. This work involves all staff in a very organized and effective system of review and communication. For example, the academic intervention and pupil personnel teams regularly report to administrators and confer, formally and informally, with classroom teachers, parents and community partners to ensure that interventions, services and support for students are well coordinated and focused on positive results. Through systematic and ongoing assessment, all staff monitor the impact of instruction in each content area for individuals and all groups, at each grade. When indicated, goals and instructional plans are flexibly revised to better accommodate individual, class and group needs, including those in need of academic interventions and in special settings.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Emmanuel Kaplan School (PS229)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.</b>	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>

\* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

<b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			<b>X</b>
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		<b>X</b>	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			<b>X</b>
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			<b>X</b>
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.			X
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X