



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Public School 268
92 – 07 175th Street
Queens
NY 11433**

Principal: Lissa Grant-Stewart

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Reviewer: Mike Doran

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 268 was opened in 2003 and after adding a grade each year, it is now a kindergarten through eighth grade school. The school's rationale is to provide continuity of instruction to a student population that fully reflects the multi-ethnic mix of the district. The school operates a policy of admitting students only from District 29 who are randomly chosen by lottery. Its current population of 489 students reflects the cultural diversity of the district with 64% Black students, 15% Hispanic students, 20% Asian students and 1% from White and other backgrounds. The school has a growing population of new arrivals, which is already above the average for the City. In addition the school has growing numbers of special education students (28) and English language learners (21). The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school has a very clear commitment to enabling students to reach high standards, and has been recognized as a 'High Performing/Gap Closing School.' by the State University of New York. The school has developed a distinctive curriculum with a special focus on the arts, including dance, visual arts, music and theatre. The school has also introduced an integrated technology program across the curriculum, supported by the appointment of a technology coach. The school is one of twenty-two schools participating in the City's 'iTeach/iLearn' program.

The principal leadership changed in 2004 following the departure of the first principal shortly after the school opened.

Attendance is good, and above average compared with similar schools and City schools

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides good leadership to the school.
- The principal is supported by a professional and committed administration teams and the wider teaching staff.
- High expectations, shared with the students and parents, drive the work of the school and lead to good levels of achievement.
- The school provides a calm, orderly, safe and very supportive learning environment for the students.
- Students are well behaved and have a positive, responsible and enthusiastic attitude to their learning.
- Staff are very supportive to one-another, and they are well supported by a well planned professional development program, with a generous allocation of common prep-time.
- Attendance is good, and above average for the City.
- Technology is widely used to support teaching and learning in the classroom, and the school is one of twenty-two schools participating in the City's 'iTeach/iLearn' program.
- A strong comprehensive arts program is central to the vision of the school and provides a distinctive enhancement to the academic program, and to the extensive out-of-school activities program.
- The 'workshop method' of teaching is used across the school and provides an effective lesson planning structure informed by the gathering and use of student assessment data.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop internal assessment and its alignment with external standardized tests to better inform and adapt lesson planning and the setting of challenging goals, and to more closely monitor the progress of students.
- Further develop the use of technology by teachers in managing and analyzing assessment data to inform their planning.
- Re-establish the parent-teacher association to ensure closer involvement of parents in the running of the school and the education of their children.
- Further develop the differentiated delivery of instructional programs in science and social studies.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with some well developed features

In the short space of time since her appointment, the principal has been successful in giving the school a clear vision and sense of direction. The distinctive focus on the arts, integrated with the wider curriculum, drawing on professional expertise within and outside the school, is giving the students curriculum breadth and further opportunities to achieve and raise self-esteem. The use of technology as a learning tool in the classroom is already well developed, and the school is well placed to extend its use to the more effective management of assessment and planning data by the teaching staff.

The school's increasingly effective use of internal qualitative and quantitative data has resulted in the improving performance of the students. The school's greatest strength lies in the detailed picture it builds up of each of its students, enabling it to promote high expectations for academic achievement but without losing sight of the need for individual personal development and support.

Areas for improvement identified in this report are mainly concerned with ensuring consistency in the gathering and effective use of data across the school, and with further extending the analysis of data to inform planning and monitoring progress at the classroom and whole-school level. The school is well placed to carry-out such further improvements.

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 school collects and analyzes a wide range of data relating to the performance and progress of individuals and groups of students. This includes information from standardized tests, tests produced by teachers to monitor learning in areas of the curriculum, and continuous assessment conducted during lessons. This data, together with information about students' personal development, is carefully scrutinized by the School's instructional cabinet, and by grade and subject teams working in collaboration, to monitor the progress of each student, to indicate next steps in learning and, where necessary, for referral to the academic intervention team for more detailed monitoring and support. Gap analysis is also used to identify and rectify particular weaknesses in the instructional programs and their delivery.

The assessments, scored and sometimes designed in school, play an important role in informing instructional planning on a continuous basis. However, the school recognizes the need to further develop the school's baseline testing to inform curriculum and instructional planning in all areas at the start of each grade. Systems for the internal gathering of student data are furthest developed in English language, arts and mathematics. The other subject areas now need to be brought up to the same level. The

use of technology to support teachers in their management and analysis of assessment data is also an area of development for the school.

The school has a clear policy for monitoring the progress of every student throughout the year and timely contact is made with parents during each marking period to address any concerns.

The progress of students in each subject area of the curriculum, class by class, grade by grade is scrutinized to inform whole-school planning. School performance is compared with similar and City-wide schools. Present and past results and the relative performance of each cohort of students are compared as they pass through the school. The school recognizes the need to further extend data collection and analysis to sub-groups particularly special education students and English language learners.

School summative data over the past four years in English language arts, mathematics and science indicates that the proportion of students achieving levels 3 and 4 in State tests is increasing and is now above the average City average. The school has also been successful in reducing the proportion of students at level 1.

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 has high expectations of its students. The progress of students is monitored closely, and where there is a concern, parents are involved, and students are immediately referred to appropriate support and or intervention programs.

The school recognizes that the data from standardized tests passed onto teachers, and data from their own assessments in the classroom, needs to be more rigorously and consistently integrated into planning for students’ next steps and the setting of challenging goals for the students. The school also recognizes the need to further extend its use of data to inform planning and the setting and monitoring of goals at the whole school level.

The school has well-established organizational structures that encourage collaborative working at grade and departmental level in developing the curriculum, instructional programs and assessment. The high level of trust that exists between staff means that teachers are not afraid to share reflection on their practice and make improvements.

The literacy and mathematics coaches play a valuable role in ensuring that school’s programs for literacy and mathematics link with learning objectives in other areas. The two coaches work in close collaboration and their understanding of how their subject responsibilities interrelate makes a significant contribution to the school’s efforts in accelerating each student’s learning. The technology coach works effectively across subject areas providing support to teachers in the use of technology to support teaching and learning in their classes. The school communicates clearly with parents and involves them from the start in their child’s learning. The school provides a wide range of curriculum events for parents to encourage them to support their child’s learning at home. Parents appreciate the ready access they have to staff and the timeliness with which teachers let them know of any concerns.

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 with some well developed features.

The school’s curriculum is firmly based on high expectations of students and review of their progress. All teachers are involved in curriculum development as they review and evaluate the impact of their teaching. In this way the school has been very successful in developing its instructional programs to meet the needs of its students, and in particular in making provision for the most able through enrichment programs and activities such as the book clubs and advanced mathematics club.

Instructional programs require students to be active participants in learning and much teaching is of good quality, with some is of a high standard. Lessons are generally well planned and structured following the ‘workshop model’, and are differentiated by the well judged use of individual and group activities. Small group work is under development and offers the potential for closer and more focused assessment and support for students in the classroom, such as guided reading.

Collaborative working in pairs and in groups is a feature of many classes, and students respond positively and enjoy these interactions. Some student discussion is of high quality and contributes significantly to their learning. Students feel safe to try out ideas and solutions so that they are able to respond to challenges without fear of ‘being wrong’. Information technology is recognized as a powerful learning tool in the classroom, but its potential has not yet been fully realized. The school recognizes that a few teachers require sustained professional support in order to implement these approaches more fully and consistently.

Students’ attitudes to learning and their behavior are very good. Attendance is good and above City-wide and similar school averages. Teachers are proactive and closely monitor attendance, providing rewards that are beginning to impact on students’ punctuality. Students are very appreciative of the open-ness and approachability of staff. They are able to identify a staff member with whom they would wish to discuss issues of concern. They also confirm that the principal’s open-door policy works in practice.

Knowledge and data about student performance drives key decisions about the budget and resources, including staffing. Appropriate levels of funding are focused on the professional development of staff, and on the school improvements strategies and goals identified in the school’s comprehensive education plan.

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 carefully selects staff using a range of criteria and procedures, such as modelling a lesson, and involves the administrators in a rigorous interview process.

Professional development is firmly based on a continuous drive to improve student achievement, and is well managed by the instructional cabinet in consultation with staff. Newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school confirm that the school provides

an extremely supportive professional environment for all staff. This has been particularly important as a large proportion of teachers have less than two years teaching experience. Discussion and debate in subject and grade teams is an important part of professional development. The school provides a good allocation of individual planning time for teachers, with carefully scheduled common time for teams to meet. This provides a forum for planning interventions, collaborative team teaching, and revising decisions in the light of new information. The school is actively looking at ways of making further use of common planning time. Subject specialists, such as in science, in the upper grades provide 'push-in' professional development through collaborative teaching in the lower grade classes.

The school is a calm and orderly place, and is welcoming to students, parents and visitors. The principal, assistant principal, and other lead staff are well respected, and provide a model not only of their high expectations but also of their care and commitment to students and their families.

Formal and informal monitoring and evaluation provide evidence of the effective implementation of strategies and developments. Staff are self-evaluating and regularly reflect upon the impact of their work. The principal and assistant principal regularly and systematically observe instructional practice and provide feedback to teachers, which in turn informs planning for professional development, overseen by the instructional cabinet. The coaches follow through with professional support as appropriate.

The school is also very concerned to provide opportunities for the development of broader skills and interests and offers enrichment and extension activities to interest and engage students. In this respect, a strong comprehensive and integrated arts program, underpinned by partnerships with external professionals and organizations, is central to the vision of the school and provides a distinctive enhancement to the academic program, and to the extensive out-of-school activities program.

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 proficient.

Staff at all levels have responsibility for assessing and analyzing students' progress, for planning, for setting goals for students, and for evaluating and revising interventions according to need. The school recognizes that this is not always consistently carried out by all staff and across all subject areas. Students are also engaged in the review process and have a formal voice in the decision making process through their student government.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is a working document, reviewed as a whole regularly throughout the year, and overseen by the school leadership team. In addition, elements of the plan are reviewed in instructional cabinet meetings and in the principal's regular discussions with particular teams such as the grade teams. The school recognizes the need to extend the analysis and use of student performance data to better inform the annual Comprehensive Education Plan about the comparative performance of specific student groups, to take account of the starting points of students through consideration of value-added performance data, and to monitor and adapt the school's plans and goals.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 268	∅	✓	+
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	