



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

M. L. Lindenmeyer School

Public School 013

**191 Vermont Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10305**

Principal: Ms. C. Montijo

Dates of review: December 13 - 15, 2006

Reviewer: Andy McClean

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

The school is located on Staten Island and currently serves 756 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. Nine percent of students are English language learners, Spanish being the main language for the majority of these students. Thirty-three percent of students are Hispanic, 33% White, 21% Black and 13% Asian and other. At 2%, the school has a lower than average proportion of special education students when compared to similar and City schools. The school is eligible for Title 1 funding. Attendance is 93%, which is slightly higher than City schools and lower than similar schools. The school is currently undergoing major building renovation. The principal has been in the position since September 2006.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The hardworking principal shares a vision of success for all students through good communication with all school staff.
- Examples of innovative practice are shared and discussed by a dedicated and thoughtful teaching staff.
- The development of the school's literacy assessment binder is a good example of data use to determine the planning and teaching of all aspects of English language arts.
- The school provides a literacy-rich learning environment where students' work is celebrated and so enhances their self-esteem.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for students to engage in accountable talk.
- Strong parental links and lines of communication result in the good understanding parents have of the priorities for their children's learning.
- Very good relationships exist between adults in school, which serve as good examples for students to follow.
- Students' positive attitudes towards their learning and school life are evident in their very good behavior and cooperation.
- Intervention and student support services work well in collaboration with teachers and parents to ensure that those needing help receive the best education possible.
- There is a strong professional development program which is well matched to the needs of the school and individuals.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish a more robust approach to evaluating the impact of major actions taken to improve student learning and to identify those areas that are not making the anticipated progress.
- Improve the use of assessment data to provide greater challenge for higher-achieving students.
- Take steps to ensure that the mathematics assessment folder is developed to match the good work in English language arts.
- Strengthen the use of technology across the whole school to help students become more effective independent learners.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with well-developed features.

This is a school that is moving forward and shows good capacity to succeed. The principal, in the position since September 2006, is strengthening the involvement of all teachers and administrators in a review of current results and practices, in order to improve the progress made by students. As a result of her highly approachable and visible presence to students, parents and teachers alike, which is also true of other administrators in the school, there is a very positive attitude to learning, enabling expectations to be modeled. Despite major on-going building work, all teachers use a good degree of imagination to ensure that those classrooms with limited space are well used to provide their students with a bright, colorful and stimulating learning environment.

A major factor in the school's recent progress in achievement is the teachers' willingness to learn from more experienced colleagues, and then to attempt new approaches to teaching. There is an evident sense of pride in the work being carried out in school by all, which is reflected in parents' positive opinions of school life.

At present, although administrators are well focused on reviewing teaching practices, less time is spent in evaluating what impact these actions have had upon improving their students' results. The school has a wide range of technology resources but these are not currently used in sufficient depth to enhance the independent learning of its students, and particularly those of higher achievement.

The principal and her cabinet display great energy and commitment to improvement. High expectations are communicated to students and understood by staff. The school is seeking to increase parental involvement in order to extend their role in the education of their children.

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 has recently adopted a model of good practice in gathering data, which is in the early stages of development. Its literacy assessment binder includes helpful information about student progress using the data from a wide variety of sources. This enables all teachers to identify those students in need of support and to provide them with targets for improvement. Regular re-assessments are made which measure student progress, or lack of it, which can trigger further intervention. This process, which employs regular updating of data, such as reading results for each student, enables teachers to target their support for English language learners, for example. Data is also very well used in the early identification of students needing additional support. This leads to positive responses from an effective academic intervention team, which fully integrates the services of many support staff. Data has been used to identify higher-achieving students but its use to inform planning is less well developed.

The school has developed successful processes to analyze student progress in English language arts, particularly reading and writing. These are the areas which all teachers have targeted as priorities to improve the school's overall results. School literacy and mathematics coaches regularly compare the respective results of various groups of students. As a result of these discussions, the school is planning to develop a mathematics assessment binder that tracks student progress and achievement in line with the approach adopted within the literacy folder.

Attendance data is monitored carefully. The school has noted the variations in performance of boys and girls and different ethnic groups but has yet to use to information strategically to inform planning.

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 with well-developed features.

Leaders and staff have collaborated well in developing an effective literacy assessment binder. As a result, this is leading towards a greater teacher awareness of both student need and progress. There is a strong commitment to further developing teachers' ability to assess students' progress and discussions to this end are currently underway. For example, administrators and teachers are already planning to extend the existing good practice in English language arts to other major academic areas such as mathematics and science.

English language learners are identified early through careful data analysis. Teachers hold regular discussions with their colleagues and parents to ensure that suitable targets are set and that assistance is both well-focused and kept on track for these students. Similar approaches are adopted for special education students. This approach results in effective support programs from which student progress is regularly assessed and upgraded as necessary. The students' self-esteem and motivation have improved as a result. Staff have used data well to set targets to improve the speaking and listening skills of all students. Innovative steps have been taken to provide regular reading classes where grade 4 students act as mentors to their younger 'brothers and sisters' in grade 1. At present, teachers do not use data about higher-achieving students as effectively as they could to plan more challenging lessons for them. The school is aware of this and taking steps to tackle the issue.

Very positive support and encouragement from a knowledgeable principal and her cabinet have resulted in all teachers, from the most experienced to the newest arrivals, having a very clear and consistent understanding of what the school's main direction should be. The school Comprehensive Education Plan outlines these goals, and refers to specific targets by which progress can be measured. This is understood by all to be a plan to deliver a curriculum that focuses on ensuring all students master the basic skills of reading and writing. It provides clear outlines of actions to be taken to improve achievement throughout the year. Mechanisms where the school regularly monitors the impact of these actions and evaluates data to arrive at its next steps are, however, informal, rather than formal.

Parents are kept fully informed about their children's progress through regular formal meetings. Teachers use data generated in school to show parents how they can assist their children more effectively at home, particularly in their support for reading. This has had a positive impact upon the students' learning, as well as strengthening parent-school

relationships. Students themselves are aware of the expectations of the school and do their best to meet them.

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 well-developed features.

The curriculum meets the mandatory requirements and is firmly focused on developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The school has clearly identified the central strands to its instructional program, based on a realistic assessment of its current performance and the challenges that it faces in the future. There is recognition, based on assessment data, that students' speaking and listening skills are very important areas for development, as is improving reading and writing for all students in the school. Identification of students in greatest need of support from analysis of data has resulted in a concentration of professional development for teachers in literacy and mathematics. Teachers make good use of cross-curricular links by, for example, developing students' accountable talk in investigative work in science and mathematics. This is particularly evident when students are asked to explain the reasoning behind their solutions to problems. In many classes, the use of talking partners is a regular and successful feature, allowing students to articulate what is being learned.

As a result of the collaborative and enthusiastic approach evident in meetings, teachers plan their classes and teaching strategies carefully to assist students in greatest need of help and direction. Instructional programs are delivered by committed professionals who enjoy their work and do their utmost to engage their students. Although there is a strong sense of accountability for students' performance, at present, there is less emphasis upon planning to challenge students who are high achievers. Many of these students carry out the same tasks as their peers with little to challenge them to make extra progress. Despite this, students are positive about their enjoyment of school and recognize their teachers' enthusiasm to assist them in their learning. Students also feel comfortable about approaching staff with concerns should the need arise. They would appreciate more opportunities to participate in creative arts such as drama and music. Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are carefully made according to identified needs.

Attendance is a high priority for the school. The good procedures in place to tackle absenteeism are well known and understood by all.

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 and has selected teachers that have the talent, skills and subject knowledge to move the school forward. She has also, along with other school leaders, made a conscious decision to empower all teachers through targeted professional development which addresses students' learning. Teachers show a passion for their role as well as a willingness to develop their own expertise through professional development, much of it carried out in their own time. They are skilled in the interpretation of data and use it well to target specific individuals and groups of students. This is evidenced in the school's development and implementation of its literacy assessment binder. Specific professional development within school is clearly focused upon those aspects of

performance identified as being in greatest need of improvement. Collaboration amongst staff, as well as with outside bodies, is well established. The commitment to develop the mathematics assessment binder is a good example of this. All teachers actively seek help from their colleagues, with grade and faculty meetings providing good opportunities to share and evaluate practice.

The principal undertakes regular lesson observations, and informal walk-throughs are carried out by other administrators. Both are used effectively to assess uniformity of instruction and provide constructive feedback, which is valued and acted upon by teachers. The open, collegiate style of leadership and management results in teachers using their colleagues' observations and constructive support to improve their own techniques, skills and subject knowledge. The overall impact on student learning is positive.

The principal has made an impressive start and has the capacity to lead the school through its next stage of development. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

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.

The Comprehensive Education Plan makes effective use of data to determine what the school's current and future academic goals will be. It is detailed in its outline of specific measures and activities to achieve these goals. Formal structures to ensure that there is a regular evaluation of the outcome of such actions are less well established. The various meetings of the cabinet, leadership and instructional teams facilitate the analysis of data and the ongoing evaluation of the work of the school. Regular meetings of these senior leaders, at which measurement of progress against the medium- and short-term goals of the school take place, are less evident, however. As a result, there are limited structured opportunities for senior leaders to regularly reflect and take an objective view of student progress against the longer-term goals set.

The school leadership team and cabinet are aware of the need to further improve student achievement through identification of those areas that need support, as well as celebrating those where the school has made progress, such as in reading and writing. Regular grade and faculty meetings are held to compare and contrast the progress of students and to adjust learning goals and modify interventions where appropriate. All staff are aware of the need in the future to make evaluations of their actions based upon data, something that is not as robust as it should be at present. An open culture of professional collaboration is evident throughout the school, with all teachers demonstrating their desire to learn from and support their colleagues.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: M.L. Lindenmeyer School (PS 013)

∅ ✓ +

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: | X |
| • each student, classroom, grade level, | |
| 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: | X |
| • ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* | |
| 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: | X |
| • all other categories of interest to the school* | |
| 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