



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Eltingville School

Public School 42

**380 Genesee Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10312**

Principal: Brian Sharkey

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Reviewer: Stephanie Krusa

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 42 has 944 students in pre-kindergarten through 5th grade. Of these, 86.5% are White, 7.3% Hispanic, and the remainder comprises small proportions of students from Asian, Black and other ethnic groups. There are 20 English language learners, 2% and a slight decrease from last year, and 149 special education students, almost 16%. There are three collaborative team teaching classes at grades K, 1 and 4, and five self-contained bridge classes for students in 3rd through 5th grades.

The school does not qualify for Title 1 funds. Its 92% attendance rate is broadly average for similar schools and above the average for City-wide schools.

Community partners include the Staten Island Historical Society, Wagner College, the College of Staten Island and St. John's University, Teachers College Readers and Writers Project and the March of Dimes.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The new principal has successfully established himself as an instructional leader, able to effect and manage change, through the initiation of school-wide reforms in curriculum and instruction.
- The principal and staff communicate high academic expectations for all students.
- The principal and staff recognize the importance of building capacity to effectively analyze data and to link results to the instructional program.
- A professional development plan is in place to support teachers as they transition to new initiatives in literacy, mathematics and technology.
- The culture of the school is a supportive and welcoming one in which students, parents and staff feel valued and respected.
- There is a strong sense of collegiality among staff, who readily share best practices, learn together in study-groups and work together to improve student achievement, during and beyond the school day.
- The core curriculum, which integrates science, technology, social studies and the arts, is revised regularly to respond to needs seen in data analysis.
- The strong partnership between parents and staff is evident in the many well-attended family activities and workshops that are offered throughout the year.
- There is a coherent and sequential data-driven plan in place for students identified as needing academic interventions.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to use data analysis to focus on individuals and groups of students, to ensure all students are doing as well as they can.
- Build on the existing pool of strategies to differentiate work to enable students to work from areas of strength, as well as need.
- Further develop curriculum mapping, to promote links between content areas and identify areas for differentiation.
- Expand on the positive relationship with parents by strengthening their understanding of the new academic programs and their role as partners in the achievement of their children.
- Continue to partner with carefully selected schools to build staff capacity through inter-visitations, mentoring and modeling of best practices.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The principal took up the position in March of 2006, after serving as assistant principal. He has led the school community through a self-reflective study, comparing existing instructional practices with those endorsed by current research. Reform efforts began with intensive professional development to prepare teachers for sweeping changes in September. The sense of community has endured these changes because all constituents are engaged in the process and they already see the benefits of their collective efforts. The principal and staff have a clear plan for continual improvement.

Positive changes have taken hold. This is evident as staff work together to implement new initiatives which signal their shift from traditional to innovative curriculum and instruction. The principal is seen as a strong and effective leader by staff who report that they now have tools which give a clearer picture of student progress. Data is purposefully collected and analyzed, to determine those actions which impact on student learning, and to continually refine the instructional program. Staff cite strong support from colleagues and administration as they build on best practices.

Parents feel welcome and valued and are grateful for the family atmosphere the school provides for their children. They still refer to this as a highly traditional school but acknowledge that new programs offer more information about how and why their children are progressing. The fact that so much has changed, yet the school climate remains warm and welcoming, and that all community members are involved, is a testament to the skill with which reforms were initiated. It also indicates the community is willing to continue embracing necessary changes geared toward improvement.

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.

Teachers compile detailed data on student progress. These include formal City and State assessments, interim test-preparation instruments and classroom tools such as quizzes, tests, observations, running records and conferring notes which document ongoing learning. Staff use available data to gain a clear understanding of what students know and how they learn best. Using qualitative and quantitative data, the principal and instructional team monitor ongoing assessments to gauge achievement for the school as a whole, and for grades, classes, groups and individuals. Using this information, they assess the effectiveness of all aspects of the instructional program, including teacher performance, and allocate resources accordingly. Programs are revised or altered to match indicated needs.

When student gains are seen, the principal and team analyze what worked and strengthen or broaden implementation of successful strategies. Most recent data indicates a slight drop for 5th graders from level 4 to 3, in English language arts. An example of the attention paid to the data is that the school has analyzed this despite the drop being

almost indiscernible in the formal data report, which combines levels 3 and 4. The trend is being analyzed to determine root causes and to reverse it for future students, even though this cohort of students is moving to middle school. Although the school is aware of the achievement of ethnic groups from its test data, this information is not analyzed to the same extent as data on other groupings.

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.

There are well-established practices in place which support collegiality and enable teachers to grow as a community. They meet regularly to analyze findings, and build collegial understanding about effective strategies to address needs seen in the data. For example, teachers have regular grade-level meetings to study student work, analyzing it to determine the impact of instruction and to develop and review goals for individual and groups of students. The instructional team set clear goals which reflect high expectations for students, staff and parents, and carefully monitor progress for students, groups and individuals, against these goals. Though pleased with results, coaches indicate they would like to learn more about using protocols for looking at student work, so that discussions more effectively support goal-setting and follow-up with students. Student data is also used to set short-and long-term goals for whole-school improvement.

The school has a clear process in place which teachers follow to investigate why learning is interrupted for some children. Quick identification and immediate interventions are stressed, so that students have every opportunity to progress, rather than fall further behind. Coaches and support staff work collaboratively with teachers to be certain necessary information is gathered and effectively analyzed. Teachers are excited by the connections they are making between data and next steps, and anxious to gain experience in mining data for more definitive information.

Special efforts are made for students requiring academic intervention services. A detailed intervention plan sequences mandated steps, which teachers and staff follow in gathering information about students and in developing individual education plans to match individual needs. Teachers assess students daily and adapt instruction based on this evidence. They meet regularly with the pupil personnel team to review data and revise goals and instructional plans. Informal conferences and discussions occur among staff and with parents. To support this work, several staff have been trained in a number of support programs and work long-term with identified students.

The parent coordinator and coaches provide parents with workshops and events focused on new curriculum and instructional methods, and on ways to support learning at home. Most parents are technologically aware and can access on-line tools for their children’s formal assessment results. Despite this, many parents seem complacent about their children’s progress and do not take advantage of all the opportunities offered to engage around their academic work. In contrast, they are very involved in fundraising and comfortable supporting school activities. The principal and staff recognize that further outreach is necessary to enable parents to access data and use available resources to support learning.

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.

The school is exempt from New York City curriculum mandates but has chosen to adopt Everyday Mathematics and Balanced Literacy. In addition, students in all classrooms benefit from rich arts, science and technology programs, culminating in projects which are on display throughout both buildings. There is increased emphasis on integrating these content areas with literacy and mathematics. This is work in progress to enhance learning and strengthen concept development. An area targeted for development is curriculum mapping, which is ongoing, but needs more time as staff study content areas which spiral across grades to help them make connections with previously taught skills and concepts, and in setting grade-level goals.

In a very short time teachers have been able to demonstrate expertise in implementing the reading/writing workshop models. This is in part because staff traditionally had strong management and organization skills and had developed collegial and reflective practices. Teachers have made good progress in building differentiated instruction in response to data, but need further practice to ensure that this is consistent practice across the school. Recognizing that success looks different for each child, the school strives to provide all students with appropriate classroom settings. Two classes on each grade offer academically advanced students opportunities for extended research and enrichment activities. All other general education classes are heterogeneous, using flexible grouping strategies to structure learning for students at various levels. Collaborative team teaching classrooms partner general and special education students, allowing both groups to learn together.

For struggling students, teachers work with coaches and the pupil personnel team to tailor individual intervention plans. They receive ongoing support in monitoring for results and in revising plans over time. This area, staff admit, is challenging, because they are still learning the range of interventions they might employ. The school is planning the increased use of existing interventions programs to address these needs.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling are all carried out according to students' needs and with the promotion of their learning very much to the fore. Relationships in the school are warm and caring. Students behave well, and know that they can turn to members of staff for support should the need arise.

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's staff is stable, which has allowed teachers to establish collegial relationships and grow as a team. Turnover is low but the principal has been able to use rigorous processes to hire key staff who are instrumental in supporting the new initiatives. All staff hold high expectations for students and believe they have a responsibility to provide them with every opportunity to learn.

Professional development has been pivotal in preparing for curriculum reforms implemented in September. Commencing last winter, staff visited sister schools to observe new initiatives in model classrooms, question fellow teachers and then practice methods during summer workshops organized just for that purpose. Teachers are now mentoring and modeling for each other.

Coaches and assistant principals structure professional development to address issues and concerns identified in cabinet meetings. They also develop special workshops and study groups to address topics selected through a teacher survey. This includes a discussion group to reflect on the month's current professional text, addressing such issues as strategies for reading non-fiction text, an area indicated by recent data. Teachers have had extensive professional development in both Everyday Mathematics and balanced literacy. Teachers studied the Teachers College Reading/Writing Workshop models at Columbia, and during inter-visitations and workshops with other schools.

School administrators regularly observe and review teacher performance, and write personal goals with them, which then set the bar for future observations. This cyclical process is seen as supportive by administrators and staff. The principal is well respected, and the school is calm and orderly, with a good tone. Relationships with community-based organizations are good, and support students' academic and personal development.

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 Comprehensive Educational Plan lays out school-wide reform measures, and resultant staff capacity-building began in September. The instructional team routinely reviews Comprehensive Educational Plan Goals, assessing progress as data becomes available. Goals are revised to adjust to new data and findings are presented to staff and parents as they are developed. The principal and his administrative team use the plan to reflect on short- and long-term goals and to set up revisions for the following year. Areas that need strengthening become apparent in analysis and comparisons of classroom data, and clarify those goals which are met, and those needing revision and additional planning to back them up.

The process of evaluation of student achievement, school-wide, and for each child is ongoing and cyclical, supported by resources, staff and curriculum specialists. In this way, the school is responsive to new information and adjusts initiatives, interventions and practices in response

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Eltingville School [PS 42]	∅	✓	+
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