



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Frank Hankinson**

**Public School 050**

**200 Adelaide Avenue  
Staten Island  
NY 10306**

**Principal: RoseAnne Gillen**

**Dates of review: December 11 - 12, 2006**

**Reviewer: Rodney Braithwaite**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Frank Hankinson, Public School 50, is a neighborhood school with 543 students from kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. One hundred and eleven of these are special education students, above the City average, and 59 of them are in five self contained classes. About 82% of the students are White, 10% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and the remainder Black or other ethnic groups. In recent years there has been an increase in enrollment of special education students. The school's attendance rate is consistently about 94%, above that of City schools, and about the same as similar schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal gives strong and decisive leadership to the school, and is very well respected by students, parents and staff.
- The assistant principal and coaches have a good understanding of the schools' strengths and areas for development, and give effective support and guidance to teachers.
- All school staff have a consistent determination to continue the good improvement of the last two years.
- Students greatly enjoy attending a school where they feel safe and secure, are well cared for, and receive many diverse learning opportunities.
- The school is very successful in identifying and supporting the many needs of its students through well directed interventions, especially for special education students.
- The high expectations of staff for the achievement of their students are communicated well to parents, who are mostly supportive of the school and their children.
- The school celebrates the work of students very effectively through a wide range of colorful displays in classrooms and corridors, showing a good breadth of curriculum.
- The principal manages a tight budget very skillfully when providing the resources needed, which have been identified by the use of student data.
- As a result of continuing improvement in the collection and use of data, the achievement of students is rising steadily.
- The school has a fine, new, well utilized library, and much improved reading resources.

### What the school needs to improve

- Investigate ways in which more professional development can be provided which will align with the identified needs of both students and teachers.
- Give a better direction to students' understanding of what their learning goals are, in order that they can review their own progress accurately.
- Find the reasons for the wide difference of achievement in English language arts between male and female students, and develop strategies to improve male progress.
- Continue to build the capacity of staff to use data and assessment to differentiate effectively in their planning and instruction.
- Endeavor to find the resources for teachers to have more opportunities for intra and inter visitations, in order to help develop further their instruction skills.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

**This is a proficient school, with well developed features.**

During her five years at the school, the principal has been particularly successful in creating an ambitious and committed team of staff with increasingly higher expectations for the learning and personal development of the students. She has also been very successful in leading the creation of a welcoming, friendly and happy environment where students, and their needs, are the most important element. Students respond to this through liking their teachers and what they learn, and by valuing and respecting each other.

The assistant principal and coaches have also been invaluable in their support and guidance to pupils and staff during the school's recent introduction of changes to help improvement. The school has been successful in steadily raising achievement, through its improvements in data gathering, and its determination that all staff are accountable for maintaining high expectations for the learning of pupils. This has been most marked in the way the school provides for the learning and well-being of its special education students, who are well cared for and consistently make significant gains in their learning. The school is generally well supported by parents, and has a very active and supportive parent teachers association.

The school leadership and teachers are honest and accurate in their self evaluation, and have a good knowledge of which areas they need to develop further, as one teacher describes it, 'we are a work in progress'. They know, for instance, that more consistency is needed in the use of their assessments of students in planning for improvement, and that more focused professional development will help them. The staff has proved it is able to implement change successfully, which indicates a strong capacity for continuing 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 proficient.**

The school is using a wide range of data in order that teachers have a detailed picture of the achievement and needs of their students. Data is collected from a variety of sources including teachers' ongoing analysis of student progress. The principal and her senior staff make sure that teachers have access to as much information as possible, so that they have a good understanding of the performance of their students. However, due to changes in testing and the availability of some data, some teachers have struggled to assimilate the wide range of data that is being generated. They are finding that the most effective method of gaining insight into student progress is through regular conferencing on a one to one basis. This is developing well.

The school is especially successful in developing assessments for its special education students. This is leading to good intervention programs which produce much relevant

information about the needs and progress of these students. The administration has a good understanding of the progress of all individual students, and different groups. This enables them to analyze accurately at any given time, why certain students make better or worse progress than other students of similar background.

The school looks carefully at data of its past performance, identifying for example that progress in achievement in English language arts and mathematics is steadily rising, especially for those students in general education. Its comparisons of the performance of some groups, for example, boys and girls, are still at an early stage of development. Leaders find the comparison of the school's performance with that of other schools is very difficult, as the make up of the school's enrollment has been changing in recent times. They find that data on the performance of other similar schools is hard to come by without specific identification.

**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.**

The school has a thorough and detailed Comprehensive Education Plan which is the foundation of setting measurable goals and timetables for improvement. Much effective collaborative work takes place throughout the school to ensure that these goals are understood by staff and action is taken quickly. Teachers in each grade hold regular planning meetings together, and are constantly involved in informal collaboration, in order that there is a common understanding of the achievement and planning goals for each student year group. The assistant principal and literacy and math coaches work very closely with teachers to ensure that the schools' goals for improvement in the subjects are being met. The success of this is being shown by the recent improvements in achievement in reading and math. The school's focus on planning for the needs, both academic and behaviorally, of its special education students is also showing considerable success. The school is planning effectively for the needs of students most in need of improvement, as for example those students achieving level 1 in City and State tests. As a result, students achieving level 1 in English language arts declined from 14% in 2004 to 9% in 2005, with special education students achieving particularly well. The school is also now focusing on the performance of the newly created talented and gifted class for students in grades 1 and 2.

The school communicates very well with parents and creates many opportunities for parents to receive detailed information about the progress and achievement of their children. Students, parents and caregivers are made very clear of the high expectations the school has for the school community, expressed so lucidly by the opening statement in its yearbook 'Do what you can, with what you have, where you are'. Most, although not all, parents work well in partnership with the school and share similar ambition for the performance and achievement in learning of their children.

**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**

As the school has improved its gathering of data, staff have become much more aware as to how they can use this information in their planning of the mandated curriculum. Teachers are using their own records, information from conferencing, and many test results and assessments more effectively than in the past to align their planning to student data. The schools' self evaluation and that of many individual teachers correctly identify that there is still work to be done in order to make the differentiation of instruction more effective. Teachers have a good knowledge of their students, but there is still a lack of consistent practice in instruction which will enable all students, whatever their individual needs, to achieve well. The exception to this is the consistently good differentiation for special education students, where there is a much lower teacher/student ratio, and staff are often able to work on a one to one, or small group basis.

There are very good relationships between staff and students, who talk about their teachers with considerable affection. Students enjoy their learning, one boy saying 'it is the very best school on earth', respect adults and each other and have a good attendance record. Unexplained absences are rapidly followed up by the school.

The principal manages the budget very skillfully and takes care when appointing staff to match their experience and expertise to the needs identified by an analysis of the best available data. The budget decision making is based firmly on using data identifying the learning needs of students. Recent examples of this include a much improved selection of reading resources and a considerable upgrade of technology equipment. The school plan focuses very clearly on the resource needs of the school, but is occasionally frustrated in achieving its goals because of a lack of sufficient finance which even the ingenuity of the principal cannot provide.

**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 and leadership team promote high expectations for student learning and achievement to the faculty. The consistent use of instructional team meetings, pupil personnel, grade and academic intervention team meetings enables all staff to have a range of good information which they are expected to use to develop and revise their plans to improve student performance. Much work has taken place in professional development in some identified areas of need such as improvement in reading instruction and the skills of conferencing. Difficulties in funding and past lack of feedback from teachers, has meant that the close alignment of identified student needs and the professional personal development needs of teachers has not always been possible. The leadership has accepted that more opportunities for collaboration, probably through intra and inter school visitations could be provided for teachers. Leaders and faculty are more effective at their own self-evaluation and candidly and openly analyze how they can improve their own performance.

The principal is very well respected by the whole school community. It appreciates how well she manages change, which may not always be comfortable, because she is open, firm and decisive. She carries these qualities into her frequent observation of classroom teaching. She is supportive and accurate in her judgments of instruction skills, and also

clear in her guidance to teachers on how they can improve. Many students feel confident that they can take their problems to her.

The school runs very smoothly, and procedures are clear and understood by all. This makes for a very pleasant and welcoming learning environment. The school makes good use of all available youth and support services based upon the academic and personal needs of students. This is particularly effective for those students most in need, who require regular counseling or other intervention strategies.

**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 school has made good progress in the last four years in establishing a clearly focused Comprehensive Education Plan relevant to its needs and goals for improvement. The leadership and faculty have built upon this to give themselves a sound base from which they can monitor their planning and act upon what their information is telling them. Periodic and formative assessments take place in all classrooms on a regular basis, sometimes, as in analysis of reading and mathematics, of a very detailed data base of improvement in strands. Teachers are beginning to use such information to quickly identify weaknesses or gaps in student learning, such as inadequate comprehension of reading texts. The ability to modify plans and goals is gathering pace as staff become familiar with the range of information they have, and identifying what is most relevant to the needs of each student. Although many staff find great time pressures in evaluating, using and modifying data and plans, both the leadership and teachers have already had success in using data to set a goal such as improving the progress of students at level. The analysis of data comparing the performance within and across classrooms is developing effectively. As a result there is more confidence in setting new goals for improvement such as accelerating the learning of level 3 students to become level 4, and improving the performance of boys in English language arts. The increased flexibility of planning means that the school is well placed to make further improvement quickly.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: FRANK HANKINSON (PS 50)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<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>			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"> <li>• ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>			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"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		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.

<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.		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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			X

<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	