



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Alice Austen School

Public School 60

**55 Merrill Avenue
Staten island
NY 10314**

Principal: Bonnie Ferretti

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Reviewer: Stephanie Krusa

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 Alice Austen School serves 936 students in grades pre-kindergarten through 5. Ethnic diversity has increased in recent years. White students make up 66% of the student body, 19% are Hispanic, nearly 10% are Asian, and close to 5% are Black. At 7%, the proportion of English language-learners is lower than in similar and City schools. Most students who speak a language in addition to another language are Hispanic, with Asian students making up the second largest group.

At 13.6%, the proportion of special education students is about the same as City and similar schools. In addition to talented and heterogeneous classes, there are seven special education self-contained classes. Over 250 students at the school have individual education plans.

Student attendance, at 93.1%, is about the same as that in City and similar schools. The school is Title 1 funded.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a highly effective instructional leader, providing consistent and strategic support for students, parents and staff.
- She understands the value and importance of data and leads staff in organizing, analyzing and applying it to drive decision-making at all levels.
- Data is routinely collected, analyzed and used by the principal and staff to understand the correlation between the taught and the learned curriculum.
- Staff hold high expectations for all students, and work with parents to support and challenge them as learners.
- Teachers work together as a team, accepting responsibility for the ongoing improvement of their practice.
- Administrators and staff support the academic, social and emotional development of each student well.
- There is effective data-driven planning in place for students who need additional support and guidance to help them learn and reach grade standards.
- The school successfully blends general and special education students and staff so that they can learn together.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop use of data to show the progress of individuals, classes and group over time to broaden the school's understanding of patterns, trends and differences.
- Continue to build involvement of parents of students most at risk, to more fully engage them in the life of the school.
- Continue to extend the enrichment program to provide additional arts and research projects for advanced students
- Strengthen efforts to address the needs of the growing population of English-language learners and their parents.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The highly respected principal sets a serious yet supportive tone whereby all students, parents and staff are expected to actively focus on developing the whole child. High expectations, grounded in programs that are making a difference, are conveyed to students and parents. The principal and her administrative team are keenly aware of the progress of each child. They support teachers well by giving them the necessary tools to align instruction, monitor progress and define next learning steps. The school has created a high-functioning learning environment for students, staff and parents. The skilled staff focus on the diverse needs of a large and varied student population, and carefully consider the progress of each student, and all classes in and across grades. Teachers have a strong commitment to developing their personal expertise.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The principal and staff actively gather a considerable amount of relevant data from tests and its own extensive in-house assessment program to gain a full understanding of student achievement for individuals, classes, grades and groups. For example, staff added criteria to the City's Early Childhood Language Assessment (ECLAS) reporting sheet to give additional student information that enables them to better monitor students struggling with phonemic awareness, comprehension and oral development. To supplement City interim exams, the school implements Continental Press assessments in the fall and spring. These assessments align to each grade's curriculum content and with State and City assessments and disaggregate by student, class and grade, providing results months before City or State data is available. The information gives the school a timely and comprehensive diagnosis of what students know and can do to prepare them for the formal assessments.

Particular attention is given to collection of data for all groups, including English language learners, special education students and ethnic groups, to enable staff to effectively understand individual students' performance and that of the school's different groupings. As a result of suitable academic programs identified from the analysis, all students have made significant gains this year, but English language learners in particular. During grade level meetings, faculty conferences and professional development workshops, teachers compare previous and current data with similar schools, as well as in and across grades and for all groups and subjects. Though the school effectively compares data from year to year, it does not yet have an effective system for monitoring individual students' progress over several years.

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 uses the information from its analysis of test data to set goals that reflect the needs of students, such as effectively reading non-fiction texts and listening more strategically so that they can collect and remember important details.

The school puts particular emphasis on developing learning goals for the growing group of students entering with little English, and on improving the performance of special education students, particularly those with speech and hearing difficulties. Students not scoring as expected or who show a decline in progress trigger a sequence of additional assessment and support measures provided by classroom teachers and intervention specialists, who constantly communicate formally and informally about students. Progress towards goals is carefully monitored and programs revised as necessary to help them reach their goals.

In addition to monthly mandated grade level meetings, teachers meet voluntarily every week to plan and learn together. In each grade, teachers assess student writing against standards-based rubrics. This process enables them to ascertain what their students are doing well, what they, as teachers, need to focus on next with students, and to set goals for subsequent lessons.

The use of technology has strengthened communication between home and school about students’ goals and progress. Workshops have shown parents how to view the assessments online and see how their children answered questions. Consequently, parents understand what their children are learning and how that learning is measured and so are active partners in the learning process. Despite many opportunities, some parents do not participate as often as desired partly because of the distance some must travel for meetings. This is an issue the school continues to tackle positively.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

There are clearly set out and detailed curriculum maps for each grade, aligned with State scope and sequence guidance for each content area. Curriculum maps outline precisely how the content and skills get more difficult as students move up through the grades, building student knowledge from an established base. Assessment data from formal and informal assessments is used well to refine the maps. For instance, assessments determined that students’ word study skills were most in need of strengthening, particularly at 3rd grade. As a result, these skills are now emphasized in all subjects for kindergarten through 3rd grade.

Teachers use data from available sources, and develop new school-based resources, to deepen understanding of student achievement, and to effectively plan for needs as they develop. All areas are equally well developed. Teachers closely monitor the progress of each student, and group of students, to be certain all are matched to appropriately challenging curriculum and instruction.

Teachers are skilled in differentiating to meet the needs of English language learners, students at risk and special education students. All members of staff involved work together to plan and deliver programs that address these students' needs. For example, teachers are using science and social studies magazine articles and a range of auditory tapes and follow-up to develop students' skills of reading non-fiction texts and listening more strategically. The extended-day and enrichment activities give good opportunities for learning and support during the school day. However, while these cater for most students well, enrichment opportunities are less supportive for higher achievers.

The principal strategically allocates budget and resources, and effectively schedules staff and programs to improve learning, securely based on the information from data analysis. For example, to support special education students, those at risk and English language learners in the early elementary grades, the school uses a remedial pre-reading program to build students' phonemic awareness and other basic reading skills.

The school builds mutual respect among and between staff, students and their parents and facilitates open communication, so that any issues or concerns can be quickly addressed. The curriculum is highly engaging and supports academic and social development well. Attendance is followed up rigorously and so has been consistently above City averages.

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. She has implemented significant changes and established procedures and routines that give students and staff a focused learning environment. New teachers are carefully selected based on skills and experience, high expectations for students and commitment to personal professional development. All staff use data to assess student needs, determine gaps in curriculum and define best instructional methods to improve performance.

Professional development decisions reflect the outcomes of data on student achievement and staff self-reviews. In response to a need to build capacity for individualized and small group instruction, staff have received extensive training on how to align and differentiate instruction for students concerned. Training on how to use the readers and writers workshop model was undertaken to improve students' skills in reading for meaning. All new and current teachers receive ongoing training, assuring continuity of literacy instruction across the grades, in support of academic goals. The school's established teaching and learning relationships with other schools enable teachers to share expertise and refine teaching skills. In addition, many teachers have been successfully mentored through the National Board Certification process by the principal, herself a Board Certified member which is a prestigious honor, given only to those demonstrating a high level of professional practice.

The principal and senior staff visit classes regularly and give detailed and developmental feedback on how teaching methods and practices can be improved. This is effectively helping teachers to be reflective about their own practice and build a determination to do even better. Teachers receive formal evaluations and informal support through modeling, mentoring and conferences with the principal and administrators. Well-structured opportunities enable staff to work in teams to evaluate data and revise plans.

The school benefits from long-term partnerships with Teachers College, Wagner College, Classroom Inc., Arts Connection, MetLife and the Snug Harbor Cultural Center of Staten Island. Building renovations, supported through partnership with IKEA, have transformed previously unusable space into welcoming, high tech learning centers. Student support services align with needs, providing an additional level of assistance.

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 principal has established several structures which demonstrate proactive instructional leadership in meeting goals for accelerated learning. Ongoing data analysis, in and across classrooms and school, enables staff to assess interventions and flexibly revise curriculum and instruction, throughout the year, to reflect and address student needs. The pupil personnel team meets monthly to review data and measure the effectiveness of interventions, which are amended, as necessary, for individual students and for groups. Ongoing updates between administrators and staff support revision of the interventions program and keep all constituents informed.

The Comprehensive Education Plan sets precise long-term and interim goals that are reviewed throughout the year to assess progress, and revised if student evidence warrants action. End of year assessments sum up student learning, which, when compared to final Comprehensive Education Plan goals, provide a template for curriculum revision for the coming year. The principal and staff know students well and strive, from year to year, to align instruction and resources to address every child's learning. All staff accept responsibility for the flexible realignment of goals to improve student outcomes.

In September, all staff meet to analyze the previous year's data, and use it to inform long- and short-term planning, revise goals and establish new ones, if necessary. This cyclical process is augmented by information provided by the fall assessments. Student portfolios, providing qualitative data, are also evaluated during these meetings and in dialogue between sending and receiving teachers.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Alice Austen Elementary School (PS 060)	∅	✓	+
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