



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Lewis and Clark School

**Public School 012X
2555 Tratman Avenue
Bronx
NY 10461**

Principal: Kathleen Lefevre

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Reviewer: Alvin Jeffs

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Lewis and Clark is a District 75 multi-sited self-contained school in the Bronx serving students with severe emotional disabilities in grades kindergarten through 5 and grades 8 through 12. The four sites are Main which is made up of one grade 8 class and 15 grade 9 through 12 classes; North is made up of eight kindergarten through grade 5 classes; Bronx Lebanon which has two secondary classes and Bronx Leadership Academy which has an inclusive education class. Currently there are 291 students; of these, 65 are in the elementary grades and 226 in the secondary grades. Over half of the students are Hispanic and 43.2% are Black. The student body is predominantly male and there are only 48 female students in the school.

School related service personnel and teachers work with students to support the educational goals leading to high school graduation or placement in a less restrictive environment. There are 81 teachers and 68 para-professionals in the school. There are five guidance counselors, two school psychologists, one social worker and one speech therapist to support the related service needs of the students. Two lead teachers and one mathematics coach support the professional development needs of the teachers. The school's parent coordinator facilitates all contacts with parents and works to increase involvement of parents in all aspects of the school community.

The current principal took up her post full-time in September 2006 and has worked effectively to raise the rate of attendance which was very low when she started.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- It provides a welcoming and stimulating culture for students who have rarely, if ever, experienced this before.
- Staff are skilled at counseling students who usually have extreme forms of emotional disturbance and mental illness.
- The school seeks every opportunity to involve parents and caregivers.
- An imaginative curriculum is developing which seeks to stimulate students and increases their feelings of self-worth.
- Better rates of attendance have now been achieved than in 2005 - 2006.
- The new principal is respected by students, parents and staff.
- All staff have a deep and consistent respect for students that is clear from the hours they work and the good relationships that are apparent around the school.
- The principal has begun to introduce appropriate systems and procedures that have target-setting and student involvement as their objective.
- Teachers working with younger students have a very detailed approach to assessment and use this to identify targets well, particularly in behavior and reading.
- New approaches to the monitoring and rewarding of good behavior are having a significant effect on the climate within the school and students' willingness to learn.

What the school needs to improve

- Teachers need to place as much emphasis on the academic progress of students as on their emotional well-being.
- Teachers need to be clearer about how they identify the academic levels of students and set goals for them to progress.
- These levels and goals need to be discussed regularly with students to ensure their full understanding and involvement.
- Staff need to work in a collaborative way to ensure that there is consistency and expertise in the assessment of students and the development of goals.
- The good procedures for monitoring and maximizing attendance need to continue so that students, particularly older students, have as much study time as possible.
- Without losing her exceptional relationship with staff and students, the principal needs to ensure that she has adequate time dedicated to planning and target-setting with teachers.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is an undeveloped school with some proficient features.

The school has come through a disturbed period where attendance and standards of behavior dropped to an unacceptably low level. A new principal was appointed in September 2006 and this has had a dramatic impact on all aspects of the school. The attendance of older students is now improving steadily, a clear set of behavior support principles have been introduced and there have been many relevant and imaginative developments within the curriculum.

The school has a highly mobile population, with 42.1% newly admitted and 59.7% having been at the school for less than a year. During 2006, in Grades 3, 4, 5 and 8, in English language arts, 70.3% scored in proficiency level 1, and in mathematics, 66.2% scored in proficiency level 1. The principal and her cabinet are clear that this level of achievement can, and must, be improved. The next stage of school development needs to involve a greater focus on academic progress, with more detailed assessment and goal-setting. Within classrooms, the intention is that work will be more closely aligned to individual students and there will be more opportunities for individual and small group work.

The highly motivated staff have found the new changes interesting but demanding and everyone is aware that the next steps need to be carefully paced to avoid another drop in staff morale.

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 under-developed with some proficient features.

The complexity and very personal nature of the students' difficulties means that data, apart from proficiency levels and attendance, is subjective and often difficult to obtain. In addition, teachers have not been accustomed to collecting assessment information on a systematic basis. However, new procedures ensure that background information on new students is gained as quickly as possible and there are the beginnings of student running records, collated largely by the principal and lead teachers. The school is still some way from having a detailed profile of individuals or classes. Eight students at secondary level and five at elementary have individual education plans. These give broad targets, but are not yet developed into small-step day-to-day goals that fully help planning and differentiation.

The fact that data collection is in its infancy means that analysis of such data is also at an early stage. The principal is modeling a more rigorous use of data and patterns of achievement are already being used to inform curriculum and policy decisions. This has been particularly beneficial within the area of attendance which has risen dramatically for older students over the current semester.

Initial analysis shows that achievement does not vary dramatically by ethnicity or gender. At secondary level, staff are unable to set clear academic targets without a more detailed

knowledge of reading skills, learning styles and specific weaknesses in coordination and writing. There are good models of this in the kindergarten through grade 5 classrooms, where case discussions and lesson planning are discussed in the light of 'where are we ?' and "where should we go next ?'

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 undeveloped.

Staff work together very well to ensure that students flourish and develop a better image of themselves. Parents testify to the fact that staff commitment and understanding contribute well to the significant emotional and personal improvement they see. This collaboration has not yet extended on a regular basis to the discussion of academic goals and deadlines for students. Once again, this process does take place among those teachers working with younger students, although even here it tends to be informal and not always converted into a program that can be written down and used as the basis for discussion with guidance workers and parents.

Guidance staff are beginning to collect and discuss detailed information relating to students. Thus, by looking at the number of credits, the individual rate of attendance and adding to this the very good knowledge they have of family and social background, they are able to suggest why certain behaviors are occurring. Equally important, they have a clear idea of how the student is achieving and can later discuss this with the students themselves and their parents.

All staff are keen to identify problems before they cause a crisis. Knowing the backgrounds of students' means that they can foresee possible problems that might arise when, for example, there is a change in the pattern of care. In this way both teaching and guidance staff develop strategies for meeting the problems when they occur. Some are now seeking to extend this approach to classroom work. Much good work has been carried out with students for whom literacy is a struggle, by identifying the problem and referring the student for additional support work. The parent coordinator is a skilled practitioner who has been able to provide very practical advice for parents with regard to working with children at home and accessing support service. There is a growing awareness among staff that progress can be accelerated if there is early identification and the planning of well aligned work. Some parents are beginning to use symbols where this is the most effective form of communication with their child. It is clear from discussions with students that they would value more one-on-one discussions with staff concerning their work and next steps.

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 undeveloped with some proficient features.

The very significant challenge for this school is to provide a curriculum that motivates and develops self-worth for students whose school career has been disjointed and, in most cases, unpleasant. Many of the necessary therapeutic and motivating experiences do not sit easily within the mandated curriculum and success in the latter is difficult when students are invariably very far behind their peers by the time they are teenagers. To develop a curriculum that is both therapeutic and fits the Board of Education’s requirements is a constant challenge.

The school has introduced a number of subjects and activities that enrich the curriculum. Gym, girls dance, bilingual cooking lessons and a café enterprise project have fired students’ enthusiasm, making them keen to participate and achieve. In the case of the café work, there has been careful attention to staging the tasks students are asked to undertake. Thus, a rudimentary form of goal-setting has taken place. These initiatives are central to curriculum development. In these contexts, staff are comfortable with detailed discussions with students and assessing where each one can go next. Within classrooms students are fully engaged and appreciate the good relations and sensitive understanding they receive from their teachers. These are contributory factors to the better attendance figures, over 60% above grade 6 and over 90% for grades kindergarten through 5. Rapid response and good prompt links to home are also central to this improvement.

Within the mandated curriculum, very important because the vast majority of students do not have alternate assessments, there is less confidence. Staff are punctilious in following the English language arts and mathematics curriculum for their classes. Differentiated teaching is not very strong. As there is currently very little adaptation for individual students and student mobility is very high, many students waste time in sitting through ‘catch up’ sessions for new students. Similarly, teachers and staff are frustrated because they see students treading water when they could be moving on. There is a wish to move towards more individualized ways of planning within classrooms, but staff are concerned about when the preparation and training for this can take place.

The principal has linked finance closely to the main goals of the Comprehensive Education Plan. Staff are now clear that all new initiatives need to have a strong focus on target-setting and more individualized work within all classes. She has also gained the trust of her staff by re-aligning staff so that they teach the subjects they like and are qualified to teach. In particular, the school has recently received a learning technology grant which is being utilized in conjunction with the Teachers College and Ocean of Know to develop imaginative and motivational technology programs.

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 undeveloped, with one proficient and one well-developed feature

The principal is highly respected. She is rightly seen as a good manager and practitioner. She has introduced evening sessions so that the very able parent coordinator can contact

homes. The principal has encouraged many imaginative technology developments and secured grants for activities as varied as working with writers cooperatives and setting up a trout farm. The introduction of systems to reward and monitor good behavior has been especially effective. By staff she is seen as sensitive to their needs, but strong. Students see the improvements she has made, "She is always there for us." and "Good things are happening all the time." Day-to-day procedures are good and there is generally an air of calm. Parents are also pleased with the detailed and prompt information they receive.

The principal is keen that staff who are recruited and those who have responsibility within the school should have the highest academic aspirations for the students. Lead teachers and coaches are already modeling teaching and assessment that have individual student progress at their core. Her 'open door' policy has been immensely beneficial and healing for the school. She must now ensure that she has adequate dedicated time to develop planning and target-setting with teachers.

There has been good professional development for staff, mainly within the school itself and relying heavily on the principal, coaches and lead teachers. In addition, there is good mentoring for new staff and collaborative work for staff who wish to develop new styles of assessment, grouping and teaching. The principal has not yet had time to introduce in-depth training for assessment, running records and differentiation, but it is clearly identified within the Comprehensive Education Plan. There are classroom observations by senior staff at all sites and staff are given good, but informal feedback from these sessions.

Team planning does not take place in a systematized way, although most staff collaborate well on joint projects and exchanging up-to-date information on students. A number of staff have expressed the wish to articulate more over individual student's programs, using the different data that each teacher possesses. This is apparent in the detailed work on reading taking place in grades kindergarten through 5 and informal discussions relating to the development of specific literacy support programs with older students.

There are number of outside partnerships that enrich the curriculum. Work experience is gained within the Jewish Home for the Aged and behavior is improved through links with the New York Academy of Medicine. The Title 4 Drug and Violence Program have been used well to show students how to develop public service announcements and students have been working closely with architects to design a new playground. For students whose experience of success has been limited or non-existent, these are all very beneficial experiences.

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 undeveloped.

This school is not yet at a stage where interim goals, diagnostic assessments of progress and regular reviews of progress are built into either school or classroom management. There is a good and relevant Comprehensive Education Plan, which is the product of wide and detailed discussions with all staff. This has clear developmental links within it, leading the school to more systematic and relevant analysis of data and to plans built upon that data. It also identifies most of the issues and needs arising from the quality review. There are clear implications spelled out for professional development and the principal has a good idea of the time span needed for implementation. These elements have yet to be simplified into an effective action plan outlining when each target is to be achieved, by whom and how. Work is also needed to identify the costs associated with many of the

developments, especially with regard to providing cover for staff receiving training or engaging collaborative discussions.

Staff understanding of and motivation for planning for individual students within classrooms has moved ahead significantly. Appropriate time will now need to be set aside for teams of staff to work through the implications of more individual target-setting, more student conferencing and more small group work within classrooms.

Everyone involved agrees that Lewis and Clark School provides a safe, welcoming and stimulating environment for students often negatively affected by life experiences. The principal is laying the foundations for ways of working that should enable greater academic success to take place. Much has been accomplished over the past six months and, although new ways of working do not happen immediately, the staff believes that the scene is now set for clarifying and sharing of individual and team goals which will benefit students.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Lewis and Clark School (PS 12X)	∅	✓	+
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		