



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The New Children's School

Public School 023

2151 Washington Avenue

Bronx

NY 10457

Principal: Carolyn Jones

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Reviewer: Ted Solow

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 23, The New Children's School, a pre-kindergarten to grade 2 school is located in the Belmont section of the Bronx with an annex on the campus of Bronx Community College. The student body of 664 is 61% Hispanic, 34% Black, 2% Asian, 2% White, and 0.6% American Indian. The male to female ratio is 56% to 44%. Special education students account for 33% of the total school population in this barrier-free facility. English language learners make up 15% of the student body.

The attendance rate of 90% is affected by busing issues and the medical fragility of some students. The school receives Title 1 funding.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides strong leadership skills within a caring, collegial, and collaborative environment.
- The administrative team is highly visible and supportive of classroom activities.
- Procedures, policies, and school rules are well known and followed.
- External partnerships support the health needs of the students.
- Classroom activities actively engage students.
- The professional development program is differentiated to support the needs of new staff, senior staff, and all students.
- All scheduling, staffing, and budgetary decisions support the educational needs of the students.
- Analysis of school generated data drives the instructional program.
- Students' work is attractively displayed in classrooms to provide clear evidence of the progress made by each student.
- Staff members employ differentiated instructional activities to address the needs of their students.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop additional strategies to increase the attendance rate.
- Expand strategies to involve parents in the daily school life of their children.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The New Children's School was opened by the principal and her administrative team in 1992. The school they created is an innovative and exciting learning environment that has garnered many awards for excellence in early childhood education. One year later, the annex on the campus at Bronx Community College was opened to accommodate the children of students attending the college.

The staff includes a team of experienced, early childhood educators and new, dedicated teachers who work together as a collaborative and collegial team. School generated data is effectively used to drive the instructional program and inform educational decisions. Professional development activities are differentiated according to need, experience and level of skill. Teachers meet in grade and interest groups to discuss student achievement. Relationships with outside partners provide many health related services for the young students.

The principal and her administrative team have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for further development.

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 school has effective procedures to collect data that relate to the performance and progress of the students. Since there is little formal State data available, the staff uses many assessment tools to measure student baselines and achievement throughout the school year. In kindergarten through grade 2, literacy is assessed four times per year, and mathematics three times per year, using a variety of proven tools. The information gathered is both quantitative and qualitative; it is accurately used to identify students who are not making adequate progress and to institute intervention services.

The school analyzes literacy and mathematics data to compare the relative performance and progress being made by all the different groups within the school. Cohort achievement data is followed from year to year, including tracking students who have gone on to their next school after grade 2. All data sources are constantly reviewed to determine specific strengths, weaknesses, next steps and the need for academic intervention services in reading, writing and mathematics.

The principal monitors the academic achievement by tracking the school wide progress of every student. There is little comparable academic data from similar schools to utilize in comparisons, thus the school has developed a protocol to observe the progress of their former students in the third grade taking State exams in English language arts and mathematics. The generated student performance data is analyzed to identify areas that

need to be better addressed by the faculty and to set future academic goals in order to strengthen student performance outcomes.

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 collaborative review of performance data by teachers, coaches and administrators enables the establishment of realistic, short-term and long-term, measurable goals for student achievement outcomes. Realistic goals are set for each student, class and grade. Teachers meet with the administrators at the start and end of the academic year to set goals that are reviewed and refined after each assessment period in literacy and mathematics. Teachers and students jointly create learning logs that set the expectations in literacy and mathematics. Students, as young as kindergarten age are able to articulate their expectations. All data generated from the various assessment tools and teacher observations are used to align data to classroom practices.

Student achievement is measured against State standards in literacy and mathematics. All student data is reviewed for each grade in order to make initial judgments about academic intervention services and for those who are already receiving services. This monitoring practice enables the initiation of academic intervention services on the first day of the new school year. The staff plan literacy and mathematics units of study after the review of grade performance data. Yearly curriculum maps and pacing calendars are adjusted based upon the observed and assessed student needs.

Level 1 and level 2 students in literacy and mathematics are referred to the academic intervention service team for examination of progress. The team then observes the student in the classroom to assess which of the range of support services they need. Case conferencing is a regular practice when sufficient progress is not noted before any referrals are considered for special education services. Academic intervention services are provided by trained specialists using the push-in and pull-out models of service, during the afternoon extended day and after school in the supplemental academic enrichment services program. Parents are invited to participate in the planning process and are kept informed about the progress of all services. Students selected to receive intervention services have a personal intervention plan designed to address their specific needs, and it is closely monitored by the team in conjunction with the classroom teacher.

The school’s high expectations for all students focus on academic rigor and are conveyed to all students and their families. Parent workshops, curriculum meetings and other school events are used to keep parents informed about school goals and involved at every opportunity. Additional information is conveyed through a variety of effective formal ways as well as informal conversations at drop off and pick up times. The parent coordinator reaches out to parents to become more active participants in their childrens’ education.

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.

The school uses the curriculum mandated by the City including a balanced literacy approach. The balanced literacy is supported by elements of the Columbia University Teachers’ College workshop model of instruction. Leveled non-fiction library books are located in each classroom and also support the science and social studies curriculum. These are aligned with the State standards. The science and social studies goals are designed to allow students to meet, or exceed, literacy standards pertaining to non-fiction. The coaches and other service providers support the classroom teachers through the provision of assistance with subject area and instructional expertise. The Australia-United States Services in Education (AUSSIE) consultant provides literacy training with an emphasis on student writing. Data generated from assessments in all subjects is reviewed and analyzed by classroom teachers in order to guide their instructional practice. The principal and her administrative team closely review the aggregate data for the school and disaggregate data to analyze sub-group performance in each of the curriculum areas.

Every teacher is accountable for tracking student development using running records and assessment tools in language arts and mathematics. Teachers follow a flow of the week calendar that incorporates four days of small group instruction. On the fifth day, the class is involved in independent activity while the teacher assesses some of the class, through conferencing and informal assessments. This practice fosters continuous assessment, evaluation and regrouping as needs dictate, and also points out priorities for instruction. All classroom activities are monitored by the administrative team.

Budgetary, staffing and scheduling decisions are based on observed, expressed, and assessed needs generated by the data. There are ample supplies of textbooks, library books, professional books and other instructional supplies and materials. The technology program, aligned with instructional activities, is supported by the budget. Staff concurred that the principal is a highly effective manager.

Students are actively engaged in their learning. Halls, classroom bulletin boards and clotheslines strung across the classrooms exhibit the progression of student work from September to the present. Students stated that they are happy with the school, like their teachers, and named several staff members they like and trust.

Attendance is a priority. Student absence triggers an immediate response from the school. The principal recognizes the need to raise the attendance rate and is researching other activities to address the issue. One activity designed to address the problem includes an individual, monthly letter indicating absences and lateness. The attendance team sets policy and rules that are known and followed by all. Busing issues and medical fragility have a negative impact on the attendance of some students.

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.

Prospective staff members are invited to the school by the personnel committee. An interview and review of a writing sample, precedes class observations and the teaching of

a demonstration lesson. The principal then interviews finalists and makes her selections based on the committee's recommendations. The new hires must agree to attend 'Math in the City' training and Columbia University Teacher's College workshops during the summer prior to starting work. Additional training in assessment tools and data gathering for early childhood students is offered when time permits. Each new teacher is assigned a professional partner, who spends the first two weeks of the semester in the classroom with the new staff member, to assist in their acclimatization to the school.

Professional development activities are differentiated according to staff need, skill and ability. New teachers are trained in reading and writing in weekly, 90-minute blocks by the AUSSIE consultant. The principal leads weekly workshops for new staff in data analysis and differentiated instructional techniques. Study groups meet during lunchtimes and are trained in the school's preferred approaches. Teams of teachers, coaches and administrators attend many other professional activities at sites other than the school. Turn-key training is then provided for their peers at the school.

The principal and assistant principals are highly visible. They visit classrooms on a daily basis and provide written or oral feedback. Teachers are observed according to a schedule based on experience. A professional performance review option has been selected by 25% of the teachers in lieu of a formal observation by the principal. The traditional observation process, for all others, includes the pre-observation conference, the observation and the post-observation conference. All segments of the process take place within the same day. A timely written report is generated within the week. Inter-visitations are encouraged and supported to enable staff to observe best practices. Teachers meet during grade conferences, and informally every day, to plan, evaluate, review assessments, evaluate student work samples, and develop classroom rubrics. Supervisors meet regularly with the teachers to review their assessment data and to hold individual conversations about their teaching practices.

Parents, students and teachers state the school is well run. Policies, rules and regulations are outlined in staff and parent handbooks and followed by all. The school is a quiet, orderly learning environment. Students sing and recite poetry as they move from class to class, in order to encourage and reinforce expressive language development.

Productive partnerships with two hospitals provide well care and crisis services for community families and parent workshops on health matters. Other partners provide mental health services to the students and their families.

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 education plan defines goals and objectives for the school. It is a living document that is revisited on a bi-weekly schedule by the school leadership team. The meetings focus on data analysis, performance and progress of individual students, classes, and grades throughout the school. All goal setting and revisions are based on the analysis of school-generated data. Teachers, coaches and administrators work collaboratively to set goals and targets for the school. Each area of the comprehensive education plan is assigned to a team to monitor progress and revisions, after consultation with the school leadership team. The principal, assistant principals, coaches, staff

developers and consultants make suggestions about goal revisions, based on their analysis of disaggregated data and observation of teaching practices to address areas of concern. The school has many embedded, flexible structures to support student learning outcomes. These all successfully help to support the achievement of school goals.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The New Children's School (PS 023)	∅	✓	+
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