



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Spuyten Duyvil School

Public School 024

**660 West 236 Street
Bronx
NY 10463**

Principal: Mark Levine

Dates of review: March 12 - 14, 2007

Reviewer: Ted Solow

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

Public School 24 is a kindergarten through grade 5 school located in the Riverdale section of the Bronx. The 715 students at the school are 44% White, 31.75% Hispanic, 12% Black, 12% Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 0.25% American Indian. The male-female ratio is 54% to 46%.

English language learners presently comprise almost 6% of the student body about half that in similar and City schools. Special education services are provided for about 21% of the students, in self-contained classes, resource room, physical and occupational therapy, counseling and speech services. This is a higher proportion than similar and City schools. The school does not receive Title 1 funding.

The average daily attendance is just over 94% which is higher than similar and other schools in the City.

There are currently over 40 parent volunteers providing assistance in classrooms and special programs throughout the school. Outside partners provide after-school academic assistance and recreational activities everyday from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides strong leadership skills within a warm, caring and collaborative environment.
- The educational program actively engages the students.
- Grade teams work collaboratively to provide optimal teaching and learning conditions.
- Procedures, policies and school rules contribute to a calm, orderly environment.
- The halls and classrooms are richly decorated with many examples of student work that reflect current activities.
- Information from the analysis of data drives the instructional program.
- The professional development program effectively supports the needs of the staff and the students.
- Budgetary decisions respond to and support the educational needs of the students.
- The pupil personnel team analyzes and evaluates data to address the needs of students who need additional help for learning.
- There is a high level of parent involvement at the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Assess individual and cohort data to measure the progress of students with attendance issues and other student groups of interest in the school.
- Further refine instructional strategies to differentiate instruction within the mini-lesson.
- Expand classroom use of Smart Board technology.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The principal has put together an administrative team with appropriate expertise in early childhood education, special education, mathematics, literacy and subject area expertise. Together they have created a professional learning community that has steadily shown improvement on the English language arts and mathematics examinations since 1999. They have made a positive impact on the school community. Parents are an integral part of the school's leadership team, and they supporting many school activities.

The staff works collaboratively in grade teams to examine and use data to develop curriculum, prepare appropriate lesson plans and evaluate student work. The teams are supported well by literacy and mathematics coaches, cluster teachers with subject area expertise, other service providers and an up-to-date technology program. The use of data drives all instructional activities. Students are monitored for individual progress by their teachers at regularly set intervals. There is an effective program in place which provides good academic enrichment for high achievers in grades four and five. The principal and his cabinet have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

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

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

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

The staff collects and analyzes data from many sources to better understand their students. There is an effective system in place to monitor performance and progress of individual and groups of students. Each teacher uses past and present assessment data and their own observations, informal assessments, running records and conferencing notes to form a clear picture of each student's progress and achievements. The administrative team collates the data from all classes to monitor individual, class and grade performance and progress. Students who are identified as being at-risk or who, with some additional effort, could move up to another level are offered additional in-school services.

The school uses formal assessment data from State sources and data generated by the staff to monitor the performance of ethnic groups, English language learners and special education students. Data analysis from these sub-groups enables teachers to identify students who are not meeting targets developed in literacy and mathematics. The principal recognizes the need to further refine data gathering and analysis for students with attendance and other specific issues to monitor their performance and progress.

The administrative team reviews the school's performance from year to year against a range of factors. The school has shown a steady increase in student achievement on standardized examinations in English language arts and mathematics for the past nine years. Much of this success is attributed to improvement in special education instruction, a

school-wide focus on greater alignment of instruction with State and City standards and teachers' content knowledge. Comparisons are made with similar schools in the district and region. Data analysis and utilization of the information gathered enables administrators to effectively monitor the overall performance for individuals, classes, grades and the school. The administrative team shares data analysis with the staff to make appropriate decisions, to identify areas for improvement and to set future goals.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.

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

There is a high level of collaboration in the school community among administrators, teachers, students and parents. The school's goal is to continue the momentum of rising achievement levels of the students. To meet this broad goal, staff review current formal and informal assessment data to drive instructional activities. During conferencing sessions students and teachers develop the goals that students are expected to achieve by the end of the school year. Student goals are continually revisited to monitor progress. In every classroom rubrics are displayed to enable students to see the leaps they need to make to move on to a higher level in English language arts and mathematics.

The school has developed a profile card that identifies each student's strengths and weaknesses. Students who are identified as being at-risk, a low level 3, or an English language learner not making significant progress, are provided extra instructional support during the extended school day by a member of the academic intervention support team and by other service providers. All classroom services use the push-in model effectively. Individual student progress is monitored closely by the administrative team.

Students meet with their teachers at regular intervals to review goals and provide feedback on progress. Youngsters can clearly articulate their personal goals and discuss their next steps to move on to a higher level. Identified high performing students in grades 4 and 5 are given challenging goals and correspondingly challenging assignments to provide for their needs and are developing a new student handbook for next year. Parents and caregivers are active partners in their children's education. The school provides information regarding student progress during scheduled school events such as back-to-school night, parent-teacher conferences, and formal and informal meetings. News is shared at the monthly parent association meetings and through newsletters.

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 has elected to use the City's mandated curriculum in English language arts and mathematics. The staff develops lesson plans that are aligned with the performance indicators in the State standards. Teachers are empowered to make necessary curriculum changes. By analyzing data and curriculum, the staff is focusing its efforts for improving questioning techniques for oral comprehension. The scope and sequences to identify subject content and skills in science and social studies follows State guidelines. All

curriculum areas are supported with additional material suggested by grade teams and other professionals at the school.

Teachers are held accountable for student achievement by improving instructional skills, actively engaging students in accountable talk, setting goals, individual student conferences to share feedback and progress, having positive communication with parents and caregivers, and supporting students to ensure success. Teachers use data well to plan differentiated instructional activities for high performing students, students on grade level, at-risk students, English language learners and students with individualized educational plans. During weekly grade conferences staff prepare lessons, review current data from assessment tools, assess student work, and with the school coaches develop strategies for struggling students. While instruction is differentiated well when students work individually and in groups on specific tasks, it is not so well differentiated in the mini lesson to further refine teaching strategies. Staff know their students academic and personal needs well. Students are actively involved and so fully engaged in lessons. Most feel confident to ask for help with their work or a personal concern as a when necessary.

The principal is an effective manager. Data analysis is the key component for all budgetary, staffing and scheduling decisions. There are ample supplies of text and library materials. Effective scheduling has allowed for a lunch hour chorus and ensemble music instruction, so every student in the school learns to read music and play a musical instrument. Budgetary consideration is given to the technology program which supports the instructional efforts in the classrooms. The budget is being examined to see how Smart Board technology can be expanded into the classroom instructional program.

Procedures are in place and followed so parents are always contacted when their children are absent. A school aide monitors daily attendance closely. The principal regularly meets with a regional attendance teacher to review the status of students with long-term or irregular patterns of attendance and discuss the next steps.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

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

The school selects new staff members who meet the criteria established by the personnel committee. Interviewees are asked to teach a demonstration lesson to see how they relate to and engage students and how they listen and respond to children. Other areas judged are subject expertise, knowledge of the workshop model, and a propensity to use data to drive instructional activities. The school is highly selective because there is little turnover of staff from year to year. This commitment to hiring the most qualified teachers has contributed to the academic success at this school.

All professional development activities are designed to support the needs of staff and students. Activities take place during grade conferences, faculty conferences, and at dedicated professional development days. Some of the activities being delivered this year include comprehension, template organization to help students focus, and ways to stimulate higher order thinking skills. When staff attend off-site training sessions, they turn-key the information to their colleagues.

Grade teams, with good assistance from the coaches and administrators, have regular conversations on how to refine and use current data to improve instruction. All

professional development activities that support student achievement are monitored closely through analysis of student work, current data, achievement trends and the school leadership team's monthly walkthroughs. Student performance on unit tests in mathematics and writing units of study are evaluated in order to monitor progress and individual, class, and grade trends. Grade team meetings hold collaborative planning sessions that evaluate in detail the effectiveness of the literacy and mathematics calendars.

The administrative team is highly visible and visits classrooms on a daily basis. Teachers are given immediate verbal or written feedback after every visit. Inter-visitations among staff members are strongly supported by the administration. This year 16 teachers are conducting professional projects as an alternative to an observation. Collaborative grade team activities support teacher development, and encourage self-analysis and reflection of their goals and performance.

The principal is described as being a dynamic leader by all segments of the school community. His clearly established policies and procedures, outlined in parent and teacher handbooks and known to all, account for the smooth running of the school.

Several partnerships effectively support youth development at the school. The New York Philharmonic school partnership program supports teachers in grade 3 and 4 with music instruction and the Riverdale "Y" and Montefiore Community Center provide daily homework help and recreational activities after school.

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 school leadership team's monitoring of programs and analysis of all assessment data determine the goals and priorities in the Comprehensive Educational Plan. This evaluation of the school's work is ongoing, with a more in-depth review at the end of each year. Progress is examined in literacy, mathematics, science, social studies and the arts. All progress data and curriculum decisions are monitored and evaluated by the school leadership team during their planning sessions. Grade teams report on the revisions they make and how new instructional interventions meet the needs of all students. Teachers continually use student data to change and update classroom practices and activities. For example, when it was discovered that work was not sufficiently challenging for some students, teachers in several grades adjusted their lesson plans and made changes in the curriculum calendars to address this need. All information gathered is used to prepare and modify goals and action plans as appropriate.

Grade assessments are determined by teachers, coaches, and the administrative team. Staff are currently evaluating a commercial diagnostic tool that is designed to improve data analysis in literacy and mathematics. Student performance is regularly reviewed by the grade teams. Trained specialists give in-class services to students who are not making progress. Portfolios are used in every class. They reflect literacy, mathematics and other subject area work samples. The portfolio becomes an additional assessment tool designed to give a quick picture of the student's annual progress towards goals. Student information is shared by grade teams with new grade teachers during the annual end-of-year reorganization to inform class placements the following year.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Spuyten Duyvil School (PS 24)	∅	✓	+
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