



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Edgar Allan Poe Literacy Development School

Public School 46

**279 East 196 Street
Bronx
NY 10458**

Principal: Iris Lim

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Reviewer: Kath Wood

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Edgar Allan Poe Literacy Development School, Public School 46, is one of the largest elementary schools in the City. At present, the school educates 1233 students in grades kindergarten through 5. The majority of students, at 77%, are Hispanic with 18% Black, 3% Asian and others and a small number of White students. Over 57% of the students are English language learners, a figure much higher than found in both similar and City schools. Approximately 16% are special education students, again higher than City averages. The school receives Title 1 funding for 88% of its students which is higher than the average for similar and City schools. Attendance, currently at around 92%, is above similar schools and in line with City schools.

The school is popular and currently uses three separate sites. To alleviate the difficulties in communication commonly found in split site schools, the school has created four mini-schools, each managed and organized by an assistant principal containing a mix of grades.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is recognized by the whole school community as a dynamic leader with a clear vision for school development.
- The school collects and uses data well to track student performance and inform instructional programs.
- Strong collaboration between staff ensures openness and the sharing of good practice and ideas.
- The high quality work of assistant principals and coaches provides effective professional development and support for teachers.
- There is a calm, orderly learning culture with well integrated practices and procedures in which learning has a high priority.
- Creative budgeting ensures that a wealth of good quality resources is available to support learning.
- Administrators maintain a family culture and identity within the mini-schools while keeping a very effective whole school framework of expectations, behavior and support for all students.
- Relationships are strong throughout the school with mutual respect shown between adults and students.
- The attractive and stimulating learning environment is consistent across the three sites in all classrooms and hallways.
- Students are welcoming, confident and well mannered.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop school action planning to ensure that goals and targets are precise, have clear timeframes and are objectively measurable.
- Plan specific professional development programs to ensure greater consistency in differentiated instruction to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students.
- Revisit scheduling strategies to offer appropriate support for students while minimizing disruption to class instruction.
- Find creative ways to involve more parents in the full life of the school.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The energetic and enthusiastic principal has a clear vision for school improvement which is shared by the whole school community. This is a challenging school with large student numbers, three separate sites and high staff mobility. The principal has, during the last two years, made major changes which have turned the school around and it is now well placed to continue to improve. The school is an America's choice school and this relationship has very effectively supported the principal in devising new systems for data gathering and analysis which, in turn, are enabling teachers to improve their instruction and impact on student outcomes.

Relationships across the school are very strong and supportive, and the staff work very hard to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment for their students. The mini-school arrangement has worked well, effectively supported by the assistant principals and coaches. They ensure that all the schools have the same systems and procedures but retain their own identity and family culture. Parents are very positive about the school and know that the adults care about their children and want them to do well. Students are equally positive about the principal and their teachers and are friendly, polite and confident. The school knows its strengths and areas for development well.

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

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

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school collects a wide range of data to monitor student progress throughout the school. The data includes analysis of performance in City and State tests supplemented by information collected as an ongoing process, such as reading scores, writing skills evaluation and mathematics mastery assessments. The data is recorded in binders and electronically on the school system to provide easy access. Classroom teachers closely monitor individual and group progress as part of their instructional routines and assistant principals and coaches have responsibility for regular review of whole class, grade and mini-school performance. The principal maintains whole school assessment binders, which are very frequently updated, to keep a check on the progress of all students so that teachers and students can be appropriately supported.

As over half of the school population consists of English language learners, the school has rightly focused their efforts on carefully plotting their progress in and between the various class arrangements that are provided. These include dual language classes, transitional programs and pull-out sessions, and the school has designed useful recording systems to provide 'at a glance' information. The principal is aware of the differing progress between and within ethnic groups. There is one self-contained class for special education students, with other students in general education classes provided with regular pull-out support.

These students are, however, not making as much progress as the school would like to see and the principal has plans to have a whole school focus on accelerating their progress in the near future. The good systems for record keeping enable students in greatest need of improvement to be identified quickly and provided with appropriate support. The school has identified gender achievement in English language arts and the progress of gifted and talented students as areas of specific interest, and uses the school assessment systems to monitor and evaluate instruction and programs. The principal compares school performance over time in all subjects and has information recorded in graphical form and compares school results with other schools within the region. Less emphasis is placed however on comparison with similar and City schools.

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 proficient.

Goals and targets in the Comprehensive Education Plan are translated into specific school plans for action. These goals are established as a collaborative process by staff teams and collected and analyzed by the leadership team. Although all targets appropriately reflect identified school needs, they are not precise enough and tend to have an annual timeframe rather than identifying shorter-term, objectively measurable goals. As a result, although great effort is expended, the school is not always able to celebrate success. Goals and plans at student level, however, are much more clearly focused and well developed for individuals, classes and grades. Teachers know their students’ achievements and next learning steps well. More attention has been paid to performance in English language arts and mathematics than to science and social studies and the school is aware of the need to extend their good systems and structures into monitoring and planning for these content areas. The emphasis on improving the performance of English language learners during the last two years has been successful, as demonstrated by significant improvement in the school’s results. Students identified as being in greatest need of improvement have been well supported through the assessment processes and have received specific programs and academic support to enable them to succeed. Pull-out programs for gifted and talented students have made valuable impact as students from across the four mini-schools have opportunities to work together on challenging activities and tasks.

The school has high expectations for all, both adults and students, and these expectations are constantly and consistently shared across all the mini-schools. Students and their parents are very clear that they are expected to work hard and do their best at all times and the hard working and motivated staff are fully committed to achieving the necessary improvement in scores. The school has an open door policy and parents are encouraged to contact teachers regularly to discuss progress, in addition to the established conferencing systems. All concerns are immediately followed up and addressed. The school community is well focused on improvement and success, and much information is shared with parents. However, not all parents take the opportunities for support that are available to them. Information is always provided in the appropriate home language for them and the school has two websites for additional information and support. The principal and parent coordinator are aware of the need to find creative ways to encourage greater parental involvement in the full life of the school.

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 redesigned the whole curriculum to meet the specific needs of the student population, carefully aligned to mandated standards. This process involved all staff, administrators and external consultants, thus ensuring ownership of and commitment to planning and delivering instructional programs. The new curriculum has been carefully resourced, including increased numbers of coaching and support personnel so that all teachers have the materials, equipment and support that they need to deliver the programs successfully. Although the focus for instruction is on English language arts and mathematics, students have opportunities to study other content areas, including technology, science, social studies, art, drama and physical education. As a result, they enjoy the variety of instruction and their interest and engagement is stimulated in all aspects of their work. All students have an adult on the staff to whom they can turn if they need help or support. The school takes real pride in displaying exciting and interesting student work in all classrooms and hallways, with consistent themes and processes seen across all the mini-schools. These include motivational elements to increase attendance figures. Attendance is given high priority and good systems are in place to monitor any absences.

The principal is very skilled in budget management and acquiring grants and other financial support to ensure that her teachers and students have all they need to teach and learn effectively. Scheduling to provide students with all the services that they need is a challenge for the school. Several different systems have been tried but the school has yet to resolve the difficulties of balancing the need for individual and group pull-out periods against the advantages of undisturbed classroom instruction time. Although students benefit from small group and individual work, the logistics of providing these services across four mini-schools with a large number of students results in lots of disruption to lessons for the teachers and their students, which they find detracts from the quality of instruction. Teacher accountability for improving instruction and outcomes is a strong feature within the school. Teachers work hard to make their lessons interesting and engaging and are beginning to gain confidence in preparing differentiated work for their classes. This is not yet, however, practiced consistently across the school as some teachers find the planning easier than others.

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.

Although there is a fair amount of staff turnover with large numbers of new teachers joining the school, the principal will not compromise her high expectations for staff hires. They are informed from the outset that hard work is expected, that their students will need to succeed and that they will have to learn to use school systems for data management to achieve this success. All teachers are very well supported in their professional development. The five coaches and assistant principals plan programs to provide for individual, grade, mini and whole school needs alongside responding to teacher survey needs and issues arising from classroom observations. Informal observations are

constantly undertaken in mini-schools to supplement the formal procedures led by the principal. Teachers welcome their feedback in both oral and written form. Teachers have regular opportunities for inter-visitations in their own and other mini-schools and identified good practice is videotaped and shared. The principal ensures that teachers have opportunities to observe in grades above and below theirs so that issues of continuity and progression are understood. The principal is well respected by the whole community and has ensured that systems and procedures are firmly in place to create a smooth running school. Common preparation time is provided, on a weekly basis, for grade teams across the mini-schools, in addition to time allocated for subject and mini-school planning. This results in effective collaborative practices and ensures that ideas can be shared, not just within the mini-school but also school wide and that teachers are comfortable and confident working with different groups within the very large staff. Discussions are open and candid and relationships are good across the school with a common aim to drive the school forward.

The work of the school is very effectively supported by a wide range of external partnerships. The America's choice network provides valuable expertise and relationships with Arts Horizons, Puppetry in Practice, Educators for Social Responsibility and the Robin Hood Foundation.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The annual goals for the school are clearly identified in the Comprehensive Education Plan. This document has been compiled by the school leadership team, with input from other groups working across the school. There is an agreed meeting structure including faculty conferences, cabinet sessions and mini-school arrangements to ensure that analysis of student data informs the decision-making process and sets priorities for action. The key annual priorities are then translated into action plans which inform practice and indicate resource requirements for achievement. The action plans, however, are devised on an annual basis and do not identify the smaller steps towards achievement that would enable easier monitoring and evaluation of success and where further effort was needed. In fact, some goals are aspirational, rather than based on precise information gathered from the good assessment systems in place, meaning that they are not always achieved. The principal recognizes that more precise targets with clear timeframes and objective measurements are required to allow the school to celebrate the small steps towards success. All staff monitor students closely to ensure that they are on track with their learning and to identify appropriate support as required. Administrators scrutinize data systematically to keep a check on individual, class and grade performance. This work informs the curriculum programs, instructional strategies and intervention needs across the mini-schools and for the whole school. There are good systems in place for these practices and teachers have a wealth of information in easily accessible formats to enable them to provide for individual needs. These structures allow for flexible adaptation as needs arise during the year and have a positive impact on student performance.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Edgar Allan Poe Literacy Development School (PS 46)	∅	✓	+
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	