



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**The Edward A. Fogel School for Critical Thinking
and the Arts**

Public School 68

**4011 Monticello Avenue
Bronx
NY 10466**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Edward A Fogel School for Critical Thinking and the Arts (PS 68) is located in the north Bronx, and serves 798 students from pre-kindergarten to grade 5. The majority of students (86.5%) are Black, far higher than in similar schools or City-wide. Of the remainder, 9% are Hispanic, much lower than average, and the rest come from other backgrounds. Students from these other groups are slowly increasing in number. The proportion of students newly arrived in the country is broadly average, most coming from the Caribbean.

Just under 10% are special education students, including those in two self-contained classes. The school is successful in moving students from part-time special education to general education. The proportion of students (78%) known to be Title 1 eligible is average when compared to City and similar schools. Approximately 2% of students are identified as English language learners; this is about half the average in similar schools.

The school has strong links with a range of community and commercial organizations. Of particular note are the partnerships with Education through Music, which enables all students to learn an instrument, and Chess-in-the-Schools, providing chess tuition and an after-school chess club.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and her assistant principals give outstanding leadership; they are highly ambitious for the school and each student within it.
- Teachers are enthusiastic, have high expectations and are committed to the achievement of their students.
- The school respects and values each student as an individual, with good relationships and mutual respect.
- Students concentrate well in lessons and obviously enjoy learning.
- Staff support for each other is a strength, with excellent use of internal expertise to develop teachers' skills.
- Data on students' performance is very well used in decision-making at all levels to guide improvement.
- The school carefully targets additional programs to support students who need extra help, and does very well with special education students.
- The school has a very good reputation in the local area and those parents who get involved with the school are well supported and highly appreciative.
- Not a moment is wasted – students even read on their way to the bathroom.
- There are outstanding opportunities for all students to learn a musical instrument.

What the school needs to improve

- Further improve specific feedback to students, including conferencing, so that they know more precisely what they have to do to improve their work.
- Use the data on students' achievements to differentiate work and devise specific teaching strategies for individuals and groups of students to ensure careful targeting of what they need to learn next.
- Build on good practice to expand and strengthen the production of high-quality writing.
- Continue strategies to involve a greater number of parents and caregivers in their children's education.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school, with some proficient features.

The Edward A. Fogel School for Critical Thinking and the Arts is an effective school with high expectations for each student. The principal and assistant principals are gifted educators who lead a strong faculty who know their students very well and are committed to raising their achievement. Teaching is purposeful and students concentrate and behave well. The school values each child as an individual, based on good relationships and mutual respect.

Staff at all levels use data very well to monitor and analyze students' progress, and as a result, test results have been rising over the past few years. Professional development takes place in a culture of support and constructive challenge, with teachers engaged in constant dialogue about student achievement. The next steps for teachers are to plan differentiated work for an even better match to students' needs and to improve the quality of feedback so that students become more active partners in their own learning.

Parents who are involved with the school are very satisfied and pleased with the progress their children make. One parent said, 'This school is the best.' Despite the school's efforts, some parents remain difficult to reach.

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 very effective systems for collecting data of all kinds relating to the performance and progress of individuals and groups of students. Every teacher implements the Student Assessment Management System (SAMS), which uses information from a range of recent and past assessments to give an accurate picture of each student's achievement and progress. This information is used to identify students at risk of falling behind and those who, with a concerted effort, could increase their scores and move up a level.

The principal and assistant principals compare the progress of students in each subject, class by class and grade by grade, to ensure that teaching and learning are equally effective for all students. They carefully compare the school's performance against that of similar and City-wide schools. They monitor and analyze overall performance, ensuring that they know exactly the achievement of all groups represented in the school. Performance over time in each content area is evaluated to ensure that the proportion of students reaching levels 3 and 4 increases from year to year. The progress of each cohort is also monitored carefully to show how each grade is doing over time. School-level summative data shows improvement over the past three years in English language arts,

mathematics and science, and in particular the proportion of students reaching levels 3 and 4 on Statetests has been steadily rising.

Most importantly, the analysis of data leads directly to action for improvement. School leaders use the information very effectively to guide decision-making and to determine the next steps for the school.

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 overall, although there are some areas for improvement.

Teachers have very good knowledge of their students’ academic and personal development, and are committed to raising the achievement of every student. The SAMS system mentioned above, together with information from internal tests demonstrating skills learnt, continuous assessment while teaching, and observations of students’ behavior and attitudes to learning in the classroom, is very well used by teachers to understand exactly what their students know and can do. Most teachers have a detailed knowledge of the skills needed by their students to succeed in their assignments, and these are shared with students in displays in classrooms. Teachers are developing skills in conferencing with students to understand in even more detail what they do well and what they find more difficult, but this is not yet consistently and effectively used across the school. There is developing good practice in feedback to students about their performance on particular pieces of work, but this is not always specific enough for students to know exactly what they need to do to improve.

There is very close monitoring of those students who need extra help. The SAMS system is used to identify “pushables,” those students who with more effort could reach level 3 and “slippables,” students who have just made level 3 but could slip back to level 2. Plans are then made to ensure that these students get the support they need. Identification of students with specific needs is done early, so that they do not fall too far behind. Students are referred to an impressive range of interventions, carefully targeted at the most immediate area of concern. Individual education plans and other plans to address individual needs are carefully monitored by the Academic intervention services team. Parents are invited to participate in decisions about the most appropriate form of help for their child, and where they choose to do so, the school is very supportive.

The school regards parents and caregivers as essential partners in their children’s education, and works hard to involve them. The school provides a great deal of information about school events, what is taught, and how to help children at home. The parent coordinator runs a number of parent education classes. Where parents get involved with the school, they appreciate what the school has to offer, although some parents remain hard to reach.

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, with one proficient feature.

The school’s curriculum is firmly based on high expectations of students and review of their progress. Assessment information is well used to identify programs and interventions to supplement the core curriculum to ensure that students make good progress. All teachers are involved in curriculum development through the curriculum mapping exercise recently undertaken, to ensure the alignment of instruction with the necessary skills and concepts in all subject areas. In addition, the school fulfils its title ‘School for Critical Thinking and the Arts’ partly through stimulating music and chess programs, based on the recognition that some students excel outside the main content areas. Action is taken when necessary to support individual or group needs. For example, despite improving State test results in English language arts the school recognizes the need to continue to develop students’ skills in writing. The recent initiative to improve writing has seen some very good progress, but more needs to be done to develop the alignment of students’ writing skills with standards, particularly in some genres requiring higher-order skills.

Teachers are held accountable for their students’ achievements, partly through team discussions but mainly through the ‘fireside chats’, one-to-one meetings with the principal or assistant principals, during which there is close examination of the data and discussion of the way forward for every student. These discussions are firmly based on high expectations for all. Although teachers are very aware of their students’ achievement, some teachers are not yet clear about how to differentiate work for students to match the level of challenge accurately to what students need to learn next.

The analysis and use of data is central to decision-making in the school. Budget, staffing and scheduling decisions are all firmly based on documented student needs. The principal is creative in the use of the budget to secure and direct resources. Careful attention is paid to using staff talents and strengths to the best advantage.

Attendance and punctuality are good, with attendance higher than in most other schools across the City, but they remain areas of focus. The school takes very good care of its students, who are confident that they can bring concerns to members of staff. The Kids on Task Behavior Incentive Program has been very successful in promoting good behavior. Students are attentive to their teachers and concentrate well on their work, and staff ensure that not a moment is wasted – students take books when they move around the school and read while waiting to use the bathroom.

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 carefully selects staff using a range of criteria, mainly concerned with teachers’ commitment to students and their willingness to work collaboratively and use constructive feedback. The school is successful in appointing good teachers and this has almost certainly contributed to the improving results in State tests.

Professional development is firmly based on the continuous drive to improve student achievement. The principal is imaginative in the use of time and resources for professional development, and any professional development from outside the school is designed to improve instruction. For example, some teachers are not yet using conferencing effectively and this has led to the adoption of a new program in which teachers are to be trained in the very near future. In many ways, the most significant professional development comes from within the school. There is active discussion in teams, with supportive and challenging input from the coaches and assistant principals, to focus teachers on the use of data to guide instruction. These meetings also provide a forum for planning interventions and revising decisions in response to new information. Teachers learn from each other through the buddy system for new teachers, learning walks where they see their colleagues and their students at work, and the generally supportive culture in the school.

The principal and assistant principals regularly observe teaching and give constructive feedback, supported by the analysis of progress data. They know the strengths and areas for development of all teachers very well, and plan collaboratively to improve instruction. The impact of professional development is closely evaluated by the principal and assistant principals using data from their monitoring of students' and teachers' performance.

The school is welcoming to students, parents and visitors and runs very well. The principal and other school leaders are highly respected, and provide a model not only of their high expectations but also of their care and commitment to students and their families. Community-based groups work well together with the school to support families in need, and there are productive partnerships with a range of outside bodies such as Education through Music, and Chess-in-the-Schools. Fundraising opportunities with Barnes and Noble, Wendy's and Principal-for-a-Day have benefited students by securing extra resources.

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

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

The principal and her cabinet are ambitious for the school and every student in it. The school's work is kept under constant review and developments are carefully planned, drawing on all available data. Teachers actively engage in collaborative work to set the school's goals and targets. For example, there is representation of teachers in the group that writes the Comprehensive Education Plan.

The analysis and use of data permeate the school's strategies for improvement. Staff members at all levels assume responsibility for assessing and analyzing students' progress and for planning, evaluating and revising interventions and initiatives according to need. Plans have precise goals and are flexible enough to be revised when new information becomes available. Many recent improvements are due to the combination of high expectations and the increasing use of data to guide instruction and determine students' learning needs.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Edward A. Fogel School for Critical Thinking and the Arts (PS68)	∅	✓	+
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