



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Public School 107
1695 Seward Avenue
Bronx
NY 10473**

Principal: Melba Parks

Dates of review: October 24 - 25, 2006

Reviewer: Peter Lewis

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

This elementary school provides an education for 563 students from pre-kindergarten through 5th grade. Nearly all the students are Black (47.4%) or Hispanic (50.4%) with the remainder White and Asian. Nearly 92% of students have Title 1 eligibility which is well above the City average. While the proportion of English language learners (6%) is declining, the number of Spanish speakers is increasing. Twelve percent of the school enrolment are special education students. Attendance is 89.9%, which is below that of both similar and City schools.

The school aims to equip students to become productive members of society while inspiring all students to learn and meet high standards.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a skilled leader who has rapidly transformed the building into a stimulating, clean and safe environment where effective learning can take place.
- School leaders have a very clear understanding of what the school does well and where it needs to develop and have used this information effectively to secure improvement.
- The principal, with strong support from the assistant principals, has introduced a culture of high expectations that is clearly reflected in the best lessons through teaching, learning and student behavior.
- The school has made a very good start in using data from tests, other assessments and from regular, perceptive monitoring undertaken by school leaders which has already begun to improve achievement.
- Teachers know their students well and in the best lessons make very good use of this information in planning instruction that meets the needs of all students.
- Special education students and English language learners consistently benefit from skilled and closely focused support and so make rapid gains in relation to the targets that are set.
- Throughout the school, students demonstrate a very positive attitude to their learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve student progress particularly in English language arts.
- Identify and agree on the features of high quality instruction and ensure that these are modeled for all teachers as a means of improving the overall quality of teaching.
- Encourage all teachers to make full use of data on student achievement in planning instruction to meet the needs of all students, particularly those who are already achieving at a high level.
- Identify an achievable range of priorities for whole-school development and monitor progress towards these goals on an annual cycle so that modifications can be made where necessary.
- Ensure that the school's regular cycle of observations, particularly of lessons, focuses closely on those features that reflect objectives in the school's annual Comprehensive Education Plan.
- Plan and evaluate the effectiveness of the full range of teachers' professional development so that it supports the achievement of whole-school priorities.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is an undeveloped school with a number of proficient features.

In the short time since the principal's appointment, there is clear evidence of improvement in the school's ability to analyze its performance and to plan for improvement. Parents, students and staff all comment on the considerable changes that the principal has brought about since her appointment in March 2005. All point to the huge improvements in the appearance, safety and cleanliness of the building, as well as in student behavior and attitudes. Clear action has been taken to respond to absences, with the result that attendance is improving although student absence remains too high.

The principal provides a very strong lead which is echoed by staff in leadership positions, who demonstrate a strong commitment to the school. Leaders have a solid understanding of what the school is doing well and of where improvement is required and are beginning to communicate this information to teachers. Although there are indications that the use of this information is successful, there remain significant areas of the school's work that are undeveloped, particularly in teachers' use of data to fully challenge all students, including the highest achieving, and in the school's strategies for monitoring its goals to ensure improvement. Although work on these areas has begun, the school recognizes that more remains to be done.

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 undeveloped.

The school's systems for gathering and interpreting data are only recently introduced and full use has yet to be made of the information. However, the use of data is developing rapidly and has already been successful in identifying important aspects for improvement, particularly in English language arts and mathematics. However, there are limitations to what is analyzed. For example, while comparisons of performance are made across grades and, to a lesser extent, across classes, there is little evaluation of patterns of achievement across subjects or by gender.

While the school has used its analysis of student assessment information in recognizing that there is a significant legacy of underachievement, this information has not been used in implementing a consistent plan for improvement. Differentiation has been established through the identification of ability groups in the 4th grade and, as a result, there has been some improvement in students' progress. The school has yet to ensure that this potentially successful strategy is applied across all grades. While the school recognizes that there is a need to build teachers' understanding of and confidence in using data, currently this is too varied and limits the school's ability to respond rapidly to shortfalls in students' learning.

Very good systems are in place to enable the school to plan appropriate support for special education students. As a result, work is closely focused on their needs and they

make rapid gains because progress towards their targets is regularly reviewed. The school is less successful in identifying those higher-achieving students who are underperforming.

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

This area of the school’s work is undeveloped.

The principal and assistant principals have very high expectations of their students, and are aware of those areas in which improvement is required. The school has put in place a wide range of assessment information that has begun to assist it in planning work for its students and in setting goals for their achievement. However, because these systems are so new, the school has only recently begun to use this information to set clear targets for student achievement. For example, the school has made appropriate use of its analysis of test scores in English language arts and, to a lesser extent in mathematics, to identify those students who missed gaining level 3 by a small margin. Although this information has been used to target this group of students, strategies are still inconsistently applied across the school and this inconsistency is reflected in students’ current achievement.

Special education students are very well supported. Expectations are high and teaching and content are pitched at the right level to meet students’ needs. Individualized education plans identify the small steps needed to ensure progress. Regular meetings involving teachers and support staff ensure a rapid response to emerging issues. As yet, these strategies have not been applied across achievement groups and subjects.

The school has begun to provide teachers with the information that would enable them to target instruction according to students’ needs, but too much variation remains in the degree to which teachers plan and set work which challenges all students. As a result, although students are sometimes aware of the level at which they are working or of what they need to do in order to reach the next level, this is not seen consistently. This inconsistency impacts particularly upon those students with higher achievement, for whom real extension work is rarely planned and who, as a result, only make progress in line with their peers. Parents are pleased with the communication about their children’s achievements, although this does not focus enough on setting goals and plans.

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 proficient.

The school is beginning to use its well planned curriculum to generate assessment information and to identify target groups has begun to achieve success. The principal’s commitment to securing continued improvement is reflected in the clear willingness shown by many of the staff to consider new strategies. Grade 4 teachers have begun to plan their teaching by achievement groups. School assessments indicate that students’ learning has increased as a result. The school has begun to encourage other teachers to adopt this strategy.

Through the introduction of rapidly developing systems for analyzing data, together with their own monitoring, school leaders have an appropriate understanding of standards reached by students across the school and of the factors that promote or hamper students' learning. This information has been used effectively in beginning to match the curriculum and instruction more closely to students' needs. A good example of this is the broad range of resources that have been introduced for improving techniques for teaching writing.

A good understanding of the quality of instruction is developed through well-structured conferencing, lesson observation and feedback schedules. Learning walks are undertaken by senior leaders and these inform the professional development work undertaken by coaches. These activities have enabled school leaders to identify strengths in teaching and the curriculum and the principal has used this information well in making both scheduling and deployment decisions. Steady improvement in teaching is a key factor in securing students' engagement and motivation which, consequently, are both high. The school is also making good use of this information in planning for improvement. For example, while teachers know their students well, and have recently built strong relationships with them, the school recognizes that this information is too often not used at the classroom level in planning differentiated instruction.

Students' attendance has been below average since before the principal's appointment. However, a broad range of strategies has been introduced to ensure swift response to unpunctuality or absence and there are signs of improvement.

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 proficient.

The principal has a clear vision for the school's development which she has communicated effectively with staff so that it increasingly reflects a whole school view. Professional development is strongly emphasized and is informed by formal and informal monitoring by the principal and senior staff as well as by the use of student performance data. There has been a particular focus on improving the teaching of questioning and interpretive skills, an area of weakness illuminated by the analysis of test data. Modeling and coaching have been utilized well in demonstrating expectations for instructional quality.

Through frequent classroom observations and subsequent feedback to teachers, the administration has been effective in raising teachers' expectations of students, as well as helping teachers to understand the school's expectations of them. One example of this is in the work undertaken to improve teachers' use of differentiated instruction. As one of the assistant principals said; "What we love about our teachers this year is that, if we're not there, some have just started to do what we would be modeling for them." Set alongside the work that the school has already so successfully undertaken in improving tone and safety, this steady improvement in teaching is a key factor in increasing students' active participation and interest. Parents are full of praise for the improvements that have so rapidly been secured, as in the degree to which they are involved in their children's education. Daily routines are clear and well understood.

Strategies for staff development are increasingly focused on identified areas for improvement although inconsistencies in the use of comparative data limit the effectiveness in some areas. These activities enable school leaders to identify strengths in

teaching and the curriculum, and have also enabled them to make a good start in reinforcing the analysis of data to evaluate the work of the school and plan for improvement.

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

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

Since the principal's appointment, there is clear evidence of improvement in the school's ability to analyze its performance and to plan for development. Very rapid and effective action has been taken in bringing the tone and safety aspects of the school up to a good standard and, as a result, in improving students' attitude to school. Together with the clear setting of high expectations, the result of this is that a climate has been established in which learning can take place.

The school recognizes that more could be done through the increased use of ongoing teacher assessment to refine the process of planning work that fully challenges all students and, particularly, those who achieve at a higher level. Discussion, accurate monitoring and professional development, have all enabled the school to establish an effective understanding of the degree to which it has been successful in meeting its goals and so to identify areas which require further improvement. Although whole school planning follows the mandated format of the Comprehensive Education Plan, insufficient use is made of this in establishing an achievable set of targets that define the school's improvement activity over a year. Additionally, objectives are not set in such a way as to enable interim measures of progress to be made, nor to analyze the budgetary impact of developments. The school has only informal mechanisms to help it decide whether modifications to its planning are necessary in order to achieve success.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 107 [PS 107]	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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		