



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Seton Falls School

Public School 111

**3740 Baychester Avenue
Bronx
NY 10466**

Principal: Julia Rivers-Jones

Dates of review: October 26 - 27, 2006

Reviewer: Cheryl Baker

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 111 is a pre-kindergarten through grade 5 school with a population of 635, a decrease of approximately 160 students from the 2005-2006 enrollment, due to a restructuring that removed grade 6 to the neighboring middle school. Black students represent 60% of the population, Hispanic 31%, and Asian and others make up 3%. English language learners make up approximately 9% of the population and just over 11% are special education students. The school is Title I eligible.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school fosters an environment that communicates and supports high academic achievement for all students.
- The principal provides strong leadership for high quality teaching.
- The administration sets expectations for the use of all available data to understand the learning needs of all children.
- Excellence is recognized through displays of students' academic work and the use of common rubrics.
- The school holds teachers accountable for aligning their instruction to State standards.
- It fosters the incorporation of instructional technology across the grades.
- Staff provide a friendly, supportive school culture in which students, teachers and parents feel respected and valued as individuals.
- Good attendance is encouraged and rewarded.
- The school provides specialized programs and interventions to address the broad spectrum of students' learning needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to provide professional development and coaching to support the implementation of Everyday Mathematics and the school's English language arts initiatives.
- Further develop teacher's ability to effectively analyze data in order to differentiate their instruction to meet individual student's needs.
- Continue to support the integration of hardware, software and on-line data bases through professional development and coaching.
- Continue to ensure the horizontal and vertical alignment of the curriculum with City and State mandates.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school, overall.

The school is led by a principal who sets high expectations for continued academic achievement. She began at the school in September 2003. Since then students at Seton Falls School (P.S. 111) have shown continuous growth in English language arts and mathematics scores as measured by the New York State English language arts examination.

Staff use data effectively to monitor students' progress, develop their awareness of how well the school's various groups are doing, and to guide planning so that instruction is well matched to students' next learning steps.

The school culture is one that nurtures students and teachers and is described by many as an 'extended family.' It attracts teachers, parents and students to the school.

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 leaders and its teachers routinely collect data to inform their daily understanding of the progress of their students. State and City test results, interim assessments, the Grow Report, student journals and portfolios, classroom test results, running records, teacher observations, grade conferences and class section sheets are a sample of the multiple sources of information used to monitor student progress. Hallway displays of student work, with teacher comments and grading rubrics, serve as public evidence of student performance.

Comparisons of progress with the region, similar schools and the City are routine. A slight decline in performance at a grade level sparks immediate analysis of performance by teacher and student. Annual student performance is tracked and analyzed with respect to the success of special programs and interventions.

The school gathers information about its English language learners through home language surveys, tests students to determine their language proficiency and crafts individualized programs to assist their progress. Special education students are assessed according to their identified needs and receive individualized instructional programs. While the schools' student population represents a number of ethnic groups, data is not routinely analyzed along these lines.

The school uses ATS/CAP information, test results and anecdotal data to identify students whose achievement or behavior require academic intervention services or an alternate placement.

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

School leadership team members review data such as test scores and survey results to identify goals for school improvement. These goals, with concrete success targets and timelines, are set forth in the comprehensive education plan which informs the school’s annual improvement efforts. The principal and her assistants develop annual goals that include percentage targets for student test score increases. These goals are communicated to teachers whose instruction is focused on accelerating learning for each student.

Students who are identified for interventions due to learning difficulties, English language deficits, attendance, behavior problems or emotional issues receive swift and targeted attention. Less apparent are opportunities for acceleration among students below grade 4. Individual plans and services are developed and monitored through programs for special education, English language learners and academic interventions. The school offers extra help to students through extended day and after school programs.

Administrators and teachers are vigilant with respect to the daily progress of their students and are quick to identify needs, bring parents into the planning process and apply remedies. Parents whose children are progressing as expected report less outreach from 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’s curriculum is aligned with State standards and teachers’ lessons show evidence of their understanding of the strands that are to be addressed by grade level. The school’s English language arts curriculum incorporates elements of balanced literacy and is supplemented by a phonics-based program at the lower grades. Everyday Mathematics is used for mathematics instruction and is supplemented by exercises aimed at solidifying students’ command of multiplication and division tables. Literacy and mathematics coaches support teachers in the delivery of instruction, including techniques for differentiation, in their respective disciplines. Teachers recently developed pacing guides for science and social studies across the grades and these are beginning to impact positively on student progress. Special education students receive instruction that is informed by State standards but is appropriately tailored to their needs.

The school provides a rich array of resources for teaching and learning, including information technology. Texts and materials for students and teachers are plentiful and current. Staffing decisions are based on keeping class sizes small so that teachers are able to meet the needs of every student. Collaborative team teaching has been introduced to better instruct special education students in the least restrictive environment. Cluster teachers supplement instruction in the regular classroom when they provide coverage

during teacher's preparation periods. Classroom instruction provides a variety of engaging learning experiences for students. Teachers monitor each student's progress through tests, quizzes, conferencing, portfolios, students' journals and daily observations.

Students report that they feel known and cared for by their teachers, their assistant principals and their principal. Students like their school and attendance is routinely above 90%. The school contacts the home after the second absence and attendance is a component of the school's promotional criteria.

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 principal is recognized and respected as the instructional leader of the school and, in collaboration with her fellow administrators and teachers, has the capacity to move the school forward. The school is well organized and runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

The school employs a fully licensed staff that is permanently assigned to the building. Teachers want to work at Public School 111, even if it means commuting long distances. The principal selects staff based on their content preparation, teaching skills, willingness to contribute to the life of the school and ability to relate to children. Less important is their capacity to use data.

The principal and assistant principals visit classrooms several times each week. They regularly offer suggestions to teachers with respect to instructional strategies, check lesson plans and ask for updates on the progress of individual students. Teachers collaborate with grade level colleagues on a daily basis to share lessons or techniques. They receive professional development through reading groups, lunchtime presentations, faculty conferences and through specific coaching. Current initiatives are aimed at building their capacity to use data more effectively and increasing their knowledge and skills with respect to differentiated instruction. Teachers who need instruction in the use of the technologies available to them contact either of the two technology teachers or one of the assistant principals.

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 principal, assistant principals, teachers, and committees for school leadership, special education, academic intervention services and professional development meet formally and informally to track student progress, review the success of planned actions and interventions and make necessary modifications.

Grow reports, interim assessments, classroom assessments, attendance records, progress reports and marking period results are some of the data sources that are used to measure incremental progress. The school is quick to identify weaknesses and adjust

practices for identified students and is working to devise systems to ensure that the progress of each student, classroom and subject matter receives the utmost scrutiny.

The school's unification around management practices that continue to refine the use of data to drive whole-school improvement is apparent as is its capacity to take the next steps in achieving its academic goals.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Seton Falls School (PS 111)	∅	✓	+
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	