



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public School 188 Bronx

**770 Grote Street
Bronx
NY 10460**

Principal: Adrienne Edelstein

Dates of review: February 12 – 13, 2007

Reviewer: Jeff Plumb

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Background 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 188X serves 403 students with a wide range of special educational needs from pre-kindergarten through 8th grade across three sites. There are three distinctive student populations. There are students with emotional and behavioral difficulties who follow the mandated curriculum and take the standardized tests. There are the alternate assessment students who are made up of autistic students and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties. There are six inclusion classes. There is innovative practice in which students with individual education plans are educated alongside their general education peers. All students have individualized education plans and receive related therapies. The school is a Collaborative Communities Practice School.

Fifty-six percent of students are Hispanic and a further 37% are Black. The remainder are White and Asian/Pacific. The dominant language for the Hispanic students is Spanish. There are significantly more boys than girls, particularly in the classes for students with emotional and behavioral difficulties.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has proven ability in managing change through successfully creating a supportive environment for students with a wide range of complex learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Leadership is effective at all levels and promotes high expectations of students' learning and behavior.
- The Applied Behavior Analysis program for students in the pre-kindergarten promotes good social skills development through structured play.
- Lessons for students with profound and multiple learning difficulties are well planned and the tailored learning outcomes ensure that they make valuable small steps of progress.
- An effective partnership with the Columbia University Teachers' College ensures good professional development for teachers and has made a valuable contribution to driving up achievement in writing.
- The inclusion model is effective and enables students with learning difficulties to achieve their best, working alongside general education students.
- Care, support and excellent instruction enable students with emotional and behavioral difficulties to believe in their ability and engage with learning.
- Effective use is made of data to realign curriculum planning and instructional practice to raise student achievement.
- Student progress is effectively tracked and decisive interventions as required drive up standards.
- The school provides an exciting and rich curriculum which motivates students to learn.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the good practice of using picture exchange communication systems with autistic students to support them in making informed and independent choices is at all times consistently used.
- Improve the success criteria on the Comprehensive Education Plan by ensuring that they are more sharply linked to learning outcomes for students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

In the four years since her appointment, the principal has been successful in making Public School 188X a school where staff love their work. They believe that they are at the cutting edge of pioneering developments to improve the quality of education for students with a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities. Teachers agonize over what works well for students and why. They constantly review data and change or modify their instruction to raise student achievement.

There is a vision that students with the most complex needs will become as independent as possible to cope in the world. There is a steely determination that students with emotional and behavioral difficulties will once again access general education and graduate with a high school diploma. This approach turns a significant number of students around because as they engage with learning, sometimes for the first time, they gain confidence and develop self-respect. Uncompromising in her quest for excellence, the principal has the full support of her staff in aiming high. She knows her fellow administrators very well and delegates effectively.

The cabinet is never complacent in its pursuit of achieving the school's goals and questions daily the difference its actions make for special education needs populations, classes and individual students. Its emphasis on the effective generation and use of internal qualitative and external quantitative data is central to its year-to-year improvement. This data supports teachers in aligning the curriculum to students' needs and developing tailor-made personal intervention plans. This flexible model, constantly under revision, contributes to the good progress students make. Capacity for further improvement is good.

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 uses a very extensive range of assessments and tests so that teachers have a detailed picture of the prior achievement of the students. The cabinet is committed to raising test results, but tracking student progress over time is equally important. Robust systems track the small steps of progress made by students with the most complex needs and scale scores are used to show the gains made by students subject to standardized assessment. This data shows that the majority of these students make good gains even though they may not increase a level within a year.

Effective systems ensure that cabinet members have access to a comprehensive range of data. They are skilled in interpreting it accurately to make decisive decisions when allocating resources and planning learning programs. For example, analysis of test results

led to the decision to adopt very specific reading programs. This has impacted positively on raising standards in reading.

Although results in the City tests are below the City average, trends show rising standards. Data is analyzed to set student behavior goals, and the school is successful in enabling a significant number of students with challenging behavior to experience less restricted access and full integration to general education. For students with profound and multiple learning difficulties, the Brigance data is used to measure very small progress gains which inform instructional practice very effectively. Planned learning outcomes in lessons target what is really important for individual students, such as eye pointing or becoming less tactile defensive.

Data is collected to see how similar populations across three sites perform and how one class with the same student profile fairs compared with another. Robust data analysis ensures that English language learners' needs are not confused with speech difficulties typically found in a special needs population.

Data is interpreted effectively for a range of purposes. For example, monitoring data gathered from instructional practice in science led to the appointment of a specialist teacher who provides hands-on experience for students and accelerates their learning. Individual education plan targets and similar class populations are rigorously monitored, and goals for individuals and classes are realigned as a result to raise achievement. The school admits many students with behavioral difficulties immediately prior to the City standardized tests, many of whom have been held over to repeat a grade multiple times. Data shows that this inevitably has an adverse impact on the school's test results. The principal refuses to make excuses and has developed a system to demonstrate the value added for these students who arrive in the school, often disaffected with the education system, just prior to these tests.

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.

Outstanding organizational structures facilitate collaborative working at student population and at subject level in developing the curriculum, assessment and instructional program goals. Teachers are self-critical practitioners who do not shy away from making changes in instructional practice to benefit students, as seen in recent changes to the reading, writing and science programs to drive up achievement.

Meetings are effectively led. Teachers engage in very good discussion using data to make decisions about changes to the curriculum and their instruction. The school has consistent approaches to setting individual education plan goals for both learning and behavior. There is significant success in identifying very small stepped goals for students with complex learning difficulties and goals to achieve inclusion for students with emotional and behavioral difficulties. Analysis and discussion results in very specific goals being set for students with emotional and behavioral difficulties based on their gaps. One example is to develop their critical analysis skills. These decisive actions enable these students to believe in themselves and this accelerates their learning.

Criteria for setting goals and determining intervention strategies for those students demonstrating the greatest need are clear. Students subject to standardized assessment who fail to achieve level 2 in the English language arts and mathematics tests and students held over to repeat grades are targeted for focused academic intervention service support. Students with the most profound learning difficulties who do not make small gains in independence are also targeted with specific goals. Progress is checked regularly for all students and mid-term interventions are made to accelerate their learning.

As far as is possible, students are involved in setting their learning and behavioral goals. Communication with parents is excellent. Parents say, 'Teachers keep us informed daily as to how our children are doing'. Parents are supported in learning the methods used, such as picture exchange communication system, to teach their children whilst at home. High expectations are conveyed to students. Effective use is made of signing to communicate these expectations to non-verbal students.

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.

An innovative curriculum has been tailored to students' needs. Planning is flexible. Based on students' individual education plans, the curriculum and instruction are tailored to challenge and develop life skills. The sensory curriculum uses individual goals for each student with profound and multiple learning difficulties. It stimulates them and evokes communication responses by gestures, eye gazing and independent responses. The best facets of Treatment and Education of Autistic Children and related Communication-Handicapped Children and picture exchange communication systems encourage autistic students to communicate independent choices and begin to develop their social imagination. Students following the mandated curriculum experience opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills across subjects. Teachers are placed according to their special education needs specialist areas and monitoring by the principal holds them accountable. Constant realignment of curriculum and instructional practice occurs in response to the review of individual education plan goals.

The school provides students with a rich curriculum. It includes food technology, woodcraft, learning the violin, and physical education. Emotional literacy is a strong feature in response to data about the additional needs of students with emotional and behavioral difficulties. Therapy is integral to the curriculum. Occupational and speech therapists work collaboratively to ensure that non-ambulant students are correctly positioned so as to accelerate their learning.

Differentiation of activities based on student data is outstanding. Every student in the profound and multiple learning difficulties classes is challenged to achieve a specific learning outcome. Instruction engages students and motivates them to learn. The majority of students with emotional and behavioral difficulties are keen to be reintegrated back into mainstream classes and graduate as general education students. However, picture exchange communication system is not used consistently across all classes for autistic students.

Structures for supporting the social and personal development of students are excellent. Feeding and toileting programs focus on maximum independence and dignity. Students enjoy school, behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They feel safe and have

a trusted adult to turn to with their troubles. Procedures for tracking and promoting attendance are good.

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 has a very good team of teachers, paraprofessionals and therapists. Teachers who apply for a job are asked to model a lesson at interview. Under the principal's leadership, teachers are encouraged to experiment in order to enable all students to realize their potential. They think 'outside the box' and experiment to accelerate learning for all students.

Professional development lies at the heart of this successful school. It is focused on improving student outcomes. For example, a pre-kindergarten teacher delivering a behavioral analysis program honed her assessment model following a training course. It paid dividends and contributed to students making such good progress that one was moved to an inclusion class and another to a general education class. Partnership with Columbia University Teachers' College supports teachers' development of how to promote students' writing skills. The principal and assistant principals make regular classroom observations and give teachers constructive feedback. This has led to consistency in leveling libraries in classrooms and raised achievement in reading.

The principal has created a culture, across three sites, where all staff share her vision to improve this school. She listens to her staff, values their ideas, and engages them in decision-making. Consequently, this is a family school where staff enjoy coming to work and consider that they are at the cutting edge of pioneering work to provide a high quality education for students with learning difficulties. Students say, "Our teachers are wonderful". This school runs like clockwork. Based on objective evidence, school leaders have the courage to admit when something is not working as intended and make mid-course adjustments.

Partnership with outside agencies benefits students enormously. For example, the Learners for Life program builds students' confidence and self-esteem and develops their reading skills. The Federation Funded Grant supports an exciting after-school program which excites the students in their learning and improves their attendance.

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.

Ongoing reflection and critical self-review lie at the core of this successful school. Staff teams regularly use the wealth of data to review how successful their plans have been in achieving their stated goals. Some are better at using information and computer technology to assist them with this process than others. The Comprehensive Education Plan analyzes where gains have been made. It identifies groups of students that need to be targeted to accelerate progress. The plan format is designed more for general

education schools than District 75 schools, which require evaluative tools to measure and celebrate the very small steps of progress made by students with complex needs. It is not sufficiently refined to demonstrate tiny but vitally important outcomes for these students.

The cabinet members evaluate data and look to link cause and effect on a daily basis. For example, during a walkthrough, the principal observed that transition in one class was not skillfully managed and the pace of learning dropped. Immediate discussion with the class teacher resulted in modified practice which accelerated learning. The school is adept at comparing outcomes across classes, population groups and sites. Teachers appreciate the usefulness of objectively retrieved and up-to-date data in planning the next steps for students.

One of the school's major strengths is the way in which it realigns the curriculum and instructional practice based on summative and formative assessment data about student progress. Flexibility is its magical ingredient, driven by the very complex needs of the students it serves and the mobility factor of students admitted from other schools on the eve of the City tests.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 188X (PS 188X)	∅	✓	+
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