



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**The Environmental Science,
Mathematics and Technology School**

**Intermediate School 190
1550 Crotona Park East
Bronx
NY 10460**

Principal: Diana J. Santiago

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Reviewer: Rowena Onions

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Intermediate School 190 is a middle school, serving an ethnically diverse population in the Bronx. It has 266 students from grade 6 to 8. Students come from a range of ethnic backgrounds with 61% coming from Hispanic families, 38% from Black families and a small number from other backgrounds. Twenty percent are special education students. There is a small proportion (5%) of English language learners, but many more students who speak a language other than English at home. The proportion of students known to be Title 1 eligible (82%) is in line with similar schools and higher than that in the rest of the City. The proportion of students recently entering the country is low. Attendance rates at the school are a little higher than those for similar schools and the City as a whole. The school has been in existence for four years and shares a building with its sister elementary school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Staff work well together as a team, striving successfully to make improvements to the education provided for their students.
- Students are well aware of what is expected of them and most are confident that they can achieve this.
- The principal is very well respected by staff and students alike and this is the key to both the self-esteem of students and the smooth running of the school.
- Data is used well to identify the overall achievement of students as well as their individual strengths and areas for improvement.
- The school uses data well when aligning instruction to the needs of special education and lower achieving students and for English language learners.
- Intervention programs are well linked to knowledge about individuals and the programs are carefully monitored and changed when there is a need.
- The professional development of staff is closely linked to the analysis of school data and to monitoring of work.
- Great efforts are made to forge a partnership between parents and the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Use the available data better to compare the progress of groups of students, in particular by ethnic group and by gender and consider how differences can be reduced.
- Continue to work to improve the differentiation of work in class so that it always matches the learning needs of the students.
- Introduce a greater range of teaching methods in order to fully engage all students in all classes.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

In the four years since its establishment, the principal and staff have worked hard and effectively to create a school in which students can work together harmoniously. There is a very clear emphasis on using data to assist each student to raise his or her performance. At present, the school has concentrated on looking in detail at individuals and building programs to help them improve the aspects of their work that are creating the overall barriers to their achievement. Staff and the principal are dedicated to ensuring that each student is offered, and takes, the opportunity to make the most of their talents. The principal, cabinet and faculty are clear about the overall picture of achievement and have set challenging targets for the improvement of this. There has not yet, however, been sufficient focus on looking at the way different groups of students achieve, so the school has not yet looked at factors that are affecting the differences in performance, for example, between girls and boys. Additionally, the knowledge that staff have about students is not used well in all regular classes to provide all students with the correct level of challenge to promote the best learning.

The greatest strength of the school is that students feel valued and supported. This culture is very much centered on the principal and the energy and dedication she gives to the school, which is well placed to improve further.

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

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

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school collects and uses a good quantity and quality of data to give a clear overview of whole-school achievement and of the achievement of individual students. The principal and the school cabinet are diligent in using the data to monitor student performance. The data is freely available to all staff, who are expected to use it to promote progress. Increases and any decreases in achievement levels are carefully identified and this allows the school to be reactive to overall trends and to the successes or areas for improvement for individuals. Data is gained both from formal testing through the State program and from day-to-day classroom assessments. Teachers and other professionals use diagnostic and summative tests, as well as classroom records, in order to build a picture of what each student can do. This gives an objective but rounded picture of individual achievement.

At present, the school's culture is very much focused on the individual, a strategy that is promoting gradual overall improvement, particularly for special education students, English language learners, and students with lower achievement. The performance of higher achieving students is also closely monitored and promoted through additional programs.

Although the school is aware of overall trends for other groups, including ethnic and gender groups, it has not fully analysed the performance of these groups relative to each other and to all students. Thus the available data is not being used to full effect to investigate and identify factors and strategies that affect achievement differently for different groups, for example, to look at what is causing the difference in achievement between boys and girls and between some ethnic groups that is evident in the overall data.

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

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

Teachers are confident in the analysis of the available data and are precise in their understanding of what individuals need to improve because of the expectations of the principal and staff development that has been focused on this. A strength of the school’s work is the way this is translated into action in the form of additional help, intervention strategies and allocation to various extra programs. Prompt action is taken when a student shows signs of struggling and this type of help is readily available to all. Some teachers are very adept in using what they know of students’ achievements when planning classroom work. There are, however, a minority of staff who find this use of data difficult and occasionally work in class is too easy or difficult for some of the pupils, adversely affecting their ability to learn.

The principal and school cabinet make secure use of the data to set challenging targets for the overall improvement of achievement. These targets are discussed and negotiated with all staff in subject-area, grade-level and department teams and thus all understand the targets. Teachers are clear about expectations and time frames and work hard to find ways to meet these targets, but once again the strategies that are used are more often related to individuals than to the different groups of students. Particular common weaknesses are, however, identified and whole school strategies for improvement put in place. There is, for example, a current focus on note-taking which is being addressed throughout the school.

Expectations are suitably high and an emphasis on “you can do it” is a marked feature of the school. Students are very positive about their ability to reach their targets and are confident that staff will enable them to do this. The school tries very hard to involve parents in the education of their children. Expectations and strategies to help are very clearly articulated on many occasions and in many ways and many respond to this positively. There are, however, a number of parents that the school finds very difficult to involve.

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 curriculum has a clear focus on basic skills. There is, however, a wider program of work planned that includes the required curriculum with the additional opportunity to study French. Physical education is popular with the students and this interest is used to increase attendance at after school and Saturday programs. The school

makes effective use of data about individuals to decide what specific programs should be available and there is frequent review of their efficacy.

Although individual teachers are responsible for planning their own classroom work, there are regular opportunities to discuss what they plan to do in subject-area and grade-level meetings. Frequent discussions and review of data with the principal, assistant principal and staff coaches mean that teachers are challenged and helped to review and develop their work. Differentiated instruction has been an issue that the school has been working on for some time. It is well established in some classes but not all and the continuing professional development planned by the school is still needed. In the most effective classes, the teachers are considering both the learning needs of different groups of students and the way in which they can be best enabled to learn. In these classes a mix of strategies is used that takes account of different learning styles. As a result, student engagement is high and learning rapid.

All the major staffing and budgeting decisions are taken by the principal in discussion with the cabinet and staff. They are clearly based on the knowledge the school has about itself gained from the use of data and from due consultation with the students and parents.

Students highly praise the way the school responds to their academic and personal needs. They say all staff find time to listen to them and to help them. They are articulate about the fact that these relationships are a direct result of the principal leading the way. Everyone associated with the school uses the word "family" and students go as far as to say that the principal "treats us all as if we were her own kids.". Because students like the way they are treated, the majority attend school as they should. Actions to follow up the minority who do not are given high priority and are swift and generally effective.

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 relatively new status of the school, along with a number of other factors, has meant that there has been a considerable change of staff over recent years. The appointment of new staff is discussed by the principal and cabinet who have a clear picture of the skills and dedication they require from new staff. The principal has effectively drawn staff together to make a team that is keen and able to move forward. There is a high level of commitment and a developing capacity to use data effectively.

Professional development is managed well. The principal and assistant principal monitor the work of staff appropriately and are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses in the staff team, both collectively and individually. Staff coaches and peer observation contribute to the identification of needs for development. Professional development is well aligned to this knowledge and the school is already working on the factors associated with classroom teaching identified in this review. Teachers have good opportunities to work with their peers, to observe each other and to have experience of observing staff in other settings. They have good access to other types of professional development. The impact of professional development is positive. A recent focus on the development of English language arts through work in all subjects, for example, is evident in the careful way teachers develop subject vocabulary in class.

The principal has a high profile around the school and demands high standards of behaviour, relationships and effort from everyone in the building. She is highly respected and as a result, the school runs smoothly and provides the students with a place in which they can work and play together. Relationships with youth support services are good and are used well to promote student achievement.

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 school uses its Comprehensive Education Plan effectively. It is collaboratively written and forms the focus of all school improvement. A sensible number of priorities are negotiated and time frames, sometimes a year, sometimes longer, identified. The plan contains long-term measurable goals and is regularly discussed in cabinet meetings. It is seen as a working document that can be, and is, adapted as necessary. All staff work together as a team and there is a desire to see the school improve and do even better for its students. Staff willingly take part in new initiatives and thought is given to how best to make the school's work successful. The introduction, for example, of physical education to the program for extra classes was a direct result of looking at the poor attendance at extra classes by some students. Attendance at these classes has risen as a result.

The school's flexible approach encompasses the strategies being used to help a student reach his or her goals. Instructional leaders meet once every week to discuss the difficulties being experienced by any student and changes are made to programs of work accordingly. This has a direct positive impact on the progress made. While this practice focuses on individual students, it does not extend to monitoring how well different groups of pupils are doing. This means that the differences in achievement between boys and girls and between some ethnic groups that is apparent from the City data is not sufficiently analyzed or followed up.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Environmental Science, Mathematics and Technology School (IS 190)		∅	✓	+
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	