



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public School / Middle School 194

**1301 Zerega Avenue
Bronx
NY 10462**

Principal: E Myers

Dates of review: October 19 - 23, 2006

Reviewer: M Groucutt

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/Intermediate School 194 is a kindergarten through 8th grade school now in its fourth year. There are currently 1243 students enrolled at the school. Of these, 110 (approximately 8%) are special education students and 170 (almost 14%) are English language learners. A growing number have arrived in the United States from the Bengal province of India, and from Bangladesh. The school is making efforts to train some of these parents to act as translators. The overall ethnic composition of the school is 62% Hispanic, 17% Asian, 14% Black and 4% White, making it a more diverse school population than many. The school qualifies for Title 1 funding, with a higher than average percentage of eligible students.

The school is oversubscribed, operating at 119% of its capacity, and several grades have now been capped by the District. It benefits from a range of specialist facilities, for example in music and art, and has an excellent gymnasium. However, because of the overcrowding in the building some special purpose rooms have had to be changed to general classrooms.

Attendance for the current school year stands at 92.5%, an improving picture on last year's 91% and slightly better than the City average of 91.9%.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The leadership of the principal and assistant principals, together with the parent coordinator, is allowing the school to develop from an already strong position.
- Staff use data well to identify and address individual and group needs.
- The principal has undertaken a detailed and ongoing analysis of whole-school data to demonstrate the school's progress over time.
- Teachers effectively maintain a variety of data to show the progress of each individual student in their class.
- The academic intervention team is effective in providing support for teachers, modeling good practice and providing well planned professional development.
- There is excellent collaboration within and between the grade teams, enabling a whole school perspective to be developed.
- Links with outside agencies, such as the YMCA, are well used to provide additional after-school opportunities for students.
- The quality of display in classrooms and hallways creates a positive learning environment.
- There are opportunities for all students to follow a broad curriculum that includes music, art and physical education.
- Parents have good opportunities to get involved, for example as learning leaders, or in the plan to train some as Bangladeshi translators.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a greater consistency of expectation and practice between the elementary and middle grades.
- Improve the use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Extend the amount of differentiated teaching, taking greater account of individual need.
- Ensure that the quality of display materials is as good in rooms that are not a base for individual teachers, such as the laboratory, as that seen in general classrooms.
- Formalize an annual performance review for all professional staff in order to maintain the current high standards of professional practice.
- Improve supervision by increasing the number of security officers to better reflect the current size of the school and its site.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

This Title 1 funded school consistently outperforms similar schools and many others in its results in State and City tests. It is able to do this for a variety of reasons. Among these are the quality of the new building itself, the very effective use of data to track and maximize the performance of all students, and the commitment and effectiveness of the teachers and administrators. The school uses data effectively to show that its standards are improving over time and the challenge it faces is to maintain this momentum into the future and not fall into complacency. However, there is a strong desire to improve even further, and a genuine commitment to excellence.

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 data, both formal and informal, to create a detailed picture of the progress of each individual student and group. This is a continuing process through the year. Every teacher maintains a data book which is updated regularly, enabling them to monitor achievement and progress of every student. This information is also shared within and between grades, so that a whole school picture is created. A flexible approach enables individual needs to be addressed. The principal undertakes a whole school analysis from which he is able to show that the school has made progress and improved overall achievement year-on-year since it opened. The use of clear and effective rubrics means that every student is aware of the standard of their work and what they need to do in order to move it up to the next level.

Teachers often use the information they have in order to group students for activities in class in ways that best meet their needs and performance levels, though this could be extended further to increase the amount of individually differentiated instruction. For example, a greater use of technology in classes would enable the most academic students to undertake extension work, while those needing additional support could be supported by a variety of software packages. The school also lacks any smart boards since technology was not previously a priority. The new principal has expressed a desire to improve this situation.

The school measures itself against similar and other schools in the district. It is outperforming other Title 1 schools and indeed many others. This year the school has adopted the motto, "From good to great" and it is able to show through the use of the data that it uses on a daily and routine basis that it is well along the road to achieving its goal.

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.

Teachers meet together regularly within and across grade teams, demonstrating very good practice. There are opportunities for inter-visitations throughout the school including, on occasion, with other schools. This supports the effective use of data to engage in a collaborative process of setting demanding and measurable goals for both immediate and longer-term improvement. However, some differences in expectation between the elementary and middle parts of the school remain, holding back academic progress for some students. In particular, some issues of behavior are being addressed by a specially formed teachers’ committee. In the middle school the emphasis is not yet clearly on the importance of educating the whole person, rather than instruction in individual subjects.

While care is taken to promote the needs of students in greatest need of improvement in general, there is a need to look carefully at promoting good practice in behavior and classroom management in the middle school grades. With several new teachers in these grades, the school accepts that this is an ideal time to tackle this issue. Individual teachers are supported in their work by the effective academic intervention team, covering all grades for both English language arts and mathematics. This helps teachers improve their own practice through professional development, including observing modeling of lessons.

High expectations are shared with students and parents. Many parents are active supporters of the school, and at the last teacher conference event, when report cards were distributed, over 1000 parents attended. Parents can join the very good program that trains them as learning leaders, equipping them to help out in classrooms or in administrative duties, including training to act as translators. Students are strong advocates for the school and speak with self-confidence and maturity.

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.

All students receive a broad curriculum, enabling them all to participate in music, art and physical education for which the school has specialist facilities. Since the individual needs of students are identified through the use of data, the curriculum can be modified appropriately. The extended-day provision enables mandated students to make good progress and data is generated to show the progress they make as a result of additional support. An extended day provision to support English language learners is just getting under way, planned in the usual meticulous way to meet individual needs. Teachers accept responsibility for the performance of their students and data books are an excellent example of how they demonstrate progress. In the largest grades, extra classes reduce the pressure on class size, an effective use of scheduling. The budget has been carefully targeted at the greatest areas of need since the school’s foundation, and it is well resourced.

Students causing concern are a focus for grade meetings and plans based on identified need and level of performance are instituted. There is a commitment to minimizing the size of classes for special education students so that wherever possible they are taught within a collaborative teaching group and their individual education program is amended to reflect this. The building has open access, and the school encourages students with physical disability to become full members of the school community.

The great collaboration that is obvious throughout the school is a real strength and teachers work closely together, supporting each other. Staff know and respect their students, who in return show commitment to their school. Attendance levels of both teachers and students are a priority, and teachers take a pride in their ability to get to school. A school committee, another good example of collaborative practice, has been established to try to make student attendance even higher. The chosen approach, one of rewards and incentives rather than criticism, is also typical of the way in which the school operates. Students' attendance has risen because of these procedures to promote regular attendance.

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 newly appointed principal and assistant principals are maintaining, and further raising, the impressive standards achieved by the founding principal. Staff, students and parents all speak highly of the quality of leadership, as well as of the quality of teaching from individual teachers. Effective leadership is empowering most teachers to do a first class job, with the outcome being clear in the quality of learning displayed by students. The school has built a highly committed staff team, although this is currently working more effectively in the elementary grades.

The building itself also provides a great impetus for learning. It is new and has very good facilities. In addition, the majority of classrooms and hallways are well decorated with educational materials and the work of students, creating a bright and stimulating environment for learning. However in a few rooms, such as the laboratory, which are not the base for any individual teacher, display materials do not match the quality seen in other rooms.

Professional development of teachers is based on identified needs and is very much driven by the wealth of data available. This was well illustrated by a sixth grade team meeting on developments in the reading scheme, where all teachers were involved in ensuring that they are fully abreast of the requirements for effective implementation. However, the work that goes on between teachers in different grades, encouraging a whole school approach to learning, is also very apparent and means that information on students is passed on as they progress through the school, helping to maximize their achievement.

The administration team have a detailed knowledge of the strengths and areas for development of their staff. At present, this is based on instructional practice rather than an overview of each teacher's professional development. There is currently no formal opportunity for teachers to meet a member of the administration team for an annual review of performance, looking back over achievement and planning development for the coming

twelve months. This means that a chance to link individual and whole-school development is missed.

The broader curriculum is enhanced by links with outside bodies, such as the after-school program run by the YMCA. This supports and encourages a considerable number of students, promoting their academic and social development.

Although the school is, on the whole, a well-ordered and calm environment in which learning is always encouraged, it is a large building and site. In addition, with the growth of the school to its full size and all eight grades being full, security resources are small for the task. Additional officers, reflecting the needs of the school, have not yet been appointed.

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

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

The wealth of data collected, including State tests, simulated tests, ECLAS and WRAP, running records, benchmark assessments, student conferencing, tests and quizzes, among others, is used throughout the year. As a result the school is constantly focused on promoting maximum achievement for all students, based very much on an analysis of their progress through the data available. Individual teachers are expected to maintain their data books, and they all show an ability to manipulate the information they have on their students to very good effect. They take personal responsibility for maximizing achievement of students in their classes. They are supported in this task by the excellent collaboration between staff, the very good support from the academic intervention team and by the whole environment of the school, created in large part through the vision and focus of the management team. There is clear statistical evidence that individual students are making very good progress and that the standards achieved by the school are improving each year.

Grade team meetings use data very carefully to adjust programs and instruction flexibly to meet emerging needs. Performance data is well used to set goals for whole-school development, reviewed and revised regularly. The motto the school has chosen for this year, "Good to great" is well on the way to becoming a reality.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public/Intermediate School 194 (PS/IS 194)	∅	✓	+
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