



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Nathanael Greene School

Public School 036

**2045 Linden Boulevard
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: Johanna Schneider

Dates of review: January 22 - 23, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Helen Donnellan

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Nathanael Greene school is a public school with 278 students from kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 96% Black, 3% Hispanic and 1% from other ethnic groups of students. The student body includes 46% English language learners and all students are special education students. Boys account for 83% of the students enrolled and girls account for 17%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 79.8%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

This is a school with a self-contained main site and four sites across Brooklyn. Alternate assessments are used for three classes at the main site. Eight students from grades nine through twelve are in a full-time inclusion program. There are three classes for psychiatrically fragile high school age students provided at the former Flatbush Town Hall, a further three classes at a middle school program for emotionally disturbed students, six classes for emotionally disturbed students and two for hearing-impaired students at an elementary site and 15 classes for students with challenging behavior, cognitive or learning difficulties. Many of the students have experienced difficulties in earlier educational settings and are now placed in a more restrictive setting.

Students are taught in classes with either a 12:1:1 or 8:1:1 student: teacher: paraprofessional ratio. Education, health, social work and clinical specialists work together to provide a therapeutic environment for students.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides strong leadership and makes clear high expectations to staff and students at all sites.
- The school runs smoothly with transparent systems for managing disruptive events.
- Students are aware of how they are expected to behave and show high regard for staff and other students.
- Teachers and related service providers collaborate to provide unified programs which support the therapeutic community.
- Data is routinely gathered to give accurate and up-to-date information on every student's academic and personal growth.
- Information from a range of data sources is used to plan instruction which meets the needs of individual students.
- Regular meetings are held where progress is reviewed and plans revised, to meet the students' needs more closely.
- Opportunities for creative art are skillfully woven into the curriculum to increase interest and provide wider learning experiences.
- Staff share expertise extensively as part of the school's strategy for professional development.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to widen the curriculum, particularly by increasing opportunities for sport and physical education.
- Encourage all teachers to take responsibility for differentiating instruction, to reduce their reliance on content generated by software and administrators.
- Ensure that the school's priorities are clearly defined in plans with precise tasks, responsibilities, timescales and measurable outcomes.
- Refine presentation of data in formats that are easier to read and understand.
- Compare and contrast the progress and performance of different groups of students to identify variations and patterns in their learning.
- Develop ways to define individual education plan goals in formats that can be understood by students and non-professionals.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The Nathanael Greene school takes pride in being a school and therapeutic community for students with challenging behavior and emotional problems. Effective team-working between a diverse range of professionals and community-based organizations to meet the equally diverse needs of the students is central to this approach. The school is led by a strong and visible leader, who drives an agenda of continual improvement with determination and sensitivity. The school ethos is “Be respectful, responsible and safe” and procedures are followed to make this happen. Academic and personal programs are successful in helping students to progress while at the school and each year some students move into less restrictive settings. The curriculum provides opportunities for art and some physical education, but the physical education and sport component varies between sites. Professional development for new and established staff is an accepted part of school life, with staff sharing their expertise within and across sites. Data is used to monitor students’ progress and is regularly used to revise interventions. While software-generated individualized lessons and homework provide teachers with differentiated material for each student, not all teachers refine these resources further to create tailor-made instruction. The administration shares plans and priorities with the entire staff, yet these plans do not contain measureable outcomes, timescales and how the progress towards those outcomes will be monitored.

Actions have been taken to address each of the areas to improve from the previous Quality Review. This is reflected in the work on extending the curriculum. Secure foundations have been laid to broaden the curriculum with art now well-established for all students and the successful bid for funding of music augurs well for this subject. Initial steps have been taken to deal with each of the areas highlighted in the last review, but it is too early to see the full impact at all sites. The inquiry team is established as part of the school’s overall systems for monitoring and reviewing performance.

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 the student’s progress over time.

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

The school uses a range of formal assessment tools to complement its informal records, and provide a thorough understanding of students at all sites. The same rigor is applied to gathering and using data for alternate and standardized assessments. Assessments

cover academic and personal development and language acquisition. The administrative team is confident and skilled in using computer software to generate meaningful data and support staff in developing their skills in this area. Scantron software provides objective data which complements teachers' running records and other informal records, to give staff a balanced view of students' strengths and needs. The need for both systems became apparent when some students under-performed on the Scantron computer test as they had limited skills or confidence in using technology, which reduced their potential to achieve well in the computer test.

In subjects such as art, where standardized assessments are not available, staff have taken the initiative to develop tools to measure and track student progress against the requirements of the mandated curriculum. While data is shared and shows student progress and areas for improvement, this information is not always easy to access or understand. Graphics and diagrams are under-used to make the meaning of the information clear to those with limited knowledge or skill in interpreting data.

The school shares and compares data on its performance with other similar schools, through informal networks of schools in District 75. This is at whole-school level and between groups of students with similar characteristics, which gives meaningful statistical comparisons. The school does not compare and contrast the progress and performance of different groups of its own students to identify variations and patterns in their learning.

There is extensive support for teachers in interpreting and using data, led by the administration team. This has extended their professional development, but not all teachers take the initiative to analyze and interrogate data for themselves.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

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

Ongoing collaborative work is fundamental to the school's approach of being a therapeutic community. Staff from the school sites and related service providers meet at defined intervals (and more often if unexpected events occur) to plan and review how to deliver a unified service for the student and their family or caregiver. These collaborative relationships ensure that students' needs are promptly identified and actions are put in place to deal with the issues arising.

Teachers at each site meet weekly to discuss data and plan instruction and develop intervention strategies for individual students with related service providers. This therapeutic way of delivering education, social work, audiological and psychiatric services within an effective team approach enables increasing numbers of students to transfer to least restrictive educational environments (LRE). Sharing information with other service providers also means that students' needs are met without undue delay.

Staff use data to set goals for students, and these align with the goals in their individual educational plans. These are written with a high level of educational terms, which is a barrier to understanding by parents and students. Some students do participate in their annual review meetings and the views of each student are sought at their transition review, giving them opportunities to indicate preferences for their future education. The

school works hard to engage with parents and caregivers, and tries to overcome issues affecting family stability so that their impact on a student's education is minimized. They deal sensitively with practical and emotional issues when students move to different foster parents or are troubled by other events or concerns.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

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

The curriculum is carefully structured so that it meets mandated requirements and the needs of students, including alternate assessment students. Instruction is broken down into small steps for learning, linking to the assessment structure, so students progress in a steady but structured way. Hearing-impaired students with cochlear implants receive a program where language is adapted to reflect their changing understanding of speech as their experience of listening increases over time. Delivery of instruction also reflects the range of teachers' needs, which is most clearly apparent in the skilful use of technology by a visually-impaired teacher.

Creative arts and some physical education are provided for all students and at the main site the profile and quality of two and three-dimensional art on display conveys a sense of an art gallery within a school. Students express their ideas and feelings in powerful ways through art, which helps to motivate them to learn in other areas. At the main site opportunities for physical education and sport are limited and students become frustrated by not having sufficient exercise.

The recently introduced Scantron software provides individualized lessons and homework tasks, which match the levels of student's test scores. Teachers also receive extensive support from administration to help them differentiate curriculum content. Most teachers adapt these resources further to provide instruction that is tailor-made for each student, but some show less creativity and greater reliance on the materials that are provided for them. Where teachers provide tailor-made instruction, assessment data is used well to show which strengths can be built on, students' weaker areas and their personal interests.

Students demonstrate a high regard for staff, respect for each other and their work. Their pride in displays of three-dimensional art and academic work on bulletin boards is such that even in busy hallways damage rarely occurs. Staff provide strong role models for positive behavior, perseverance and overcoming challenges, especially the visually impaired class teacher, who is highly effective and demonstrates that a disability need not be a barrier to success.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

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

Professional development is part of the culture of the school and is arranged to deal with the needs of individual teachers and whole school priorities. One teacher described it as "Growing through sharing". Staff from all sites work together on designated professional

development days and twice each month representatives from all sites meet to share effective practice and ensure consistency across the school. New teachers are well supported through initial training programs, followed by separate buddy and mentor partnerships which provide long-term help in becoming effective members of the team.

Teachers, paraprofessionals, guidance staff, social workers, psychologists, audiologists, speech teachers and pathologists and other professionals working with individual students work together effectively as teams to deliver the therapeutic community approach.

The principal and her assistants are well-regarded and ensure that systems to enable the school to run without disruption are applied consistently at all sites. Students know how they are expected to behave and apply self-discipline by using the resolution center when they face challenging events. This helps to reduce incidents in classes and minimize disruption for all members of a class. Students gain reward points for positive actions, good behavior in school and on school transport as well as for academic effort, which they accumulate to earn vouchers to spend in the school store. This system is valued by them as they can equip themselves with school supplies regardless of their domestic situation.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

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

The priorities for the school are contained within the principal's performance goals and relate to improving learning outcomes in English language arts and math as well as establishing the Scantron system securely across the school. She conveys high expectation for all aspects of the school's work by her words and actions. Actions and interventions across the sites relate to the school's overall priorities. While these priorities are shared and known by all staff, the actions to bring this about are not defined within specific plans which state actions, people responsible, timescales and how progress will be monitored.

The administration team and cabinet regularly review and amend plans and interventions with a clear intention of improving students' performance and progress. There is a clear structure for reviewing instruction and each week data is routinely examined to evaluate the impact of intervention and make necessary changes.

The inquiry team is established as part of the school's processes for reviewing its work and considering the impact of actions for students. This applies to the progress of students using both standardized and alternate assessments. Data on attendance and information from the School Wide Information System (SWIS) is considered alongside academic records when decisions about changes to intervention are being considered.

Surveys gather the views of staff three times each year on school systems and areas to improve and these are taken into account when changes are made. Parents are represented on the leadership team and work with the staff to bring about continual improvement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Nathanael Greene School	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?				X	
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					X

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped