



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Pacific School

Elementary School 038

**450 Pacific Street
Brooklyn
NY 11217**

Principal: Yolanda Ramirez

Dates of review: January 22 - 23, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Ted Solow

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Pacific School is an elementary school with 478 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 41.2% Black, 37.4% Hispanic, 13.6% White, 3.1% American Indian and 3.1% Asian students. The student body includes 8.7% English language learners and 13.1% special education students. Boys account for 51.7% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48.3%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 91.7%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 72% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is highly visible, provides strong leadership and is an effective agent of change.
- The principal has a sharp focus on teaching and learning within a school culture of high expectations and academic rigor.
- The principal and staff work in a highly collaborative collegial atmosphere.
- The staff uses data effectively to drive the instructional program.
- The arts provide many opportunities for creativity and self-expression in support of the academic program.
- Professional development activities are differentiated effectively to meet the needs and experience levels of the staff.
- The school has well defined intervention practices and policies in place to improve student progress.
- Budget, staffing and scheduling decisions are very effective in supporting the educational needs of the students.
- Students are well known across grades and classes, thereby sustaining mutual trust and respect.
- The building is well maintained with halls and classrooms exhibiting high quality student work.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the use of conferencing sessions to subject areas other than English language arts to better evaluate student learning.
- Improve strategies to better share school goals and high expectations with parents.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The motto of The Pacific School, “Making great things happen”, is becoming reality. In less than two years, the principal and her cabinet have positively affected the culture and climate at the school. The determination and drive of the leaders has enabled the school to make strong academic gains. The principal, a well-respected experienced educator, leads a collegial and collaborative team of professionals, which results in an effective teaching and learning community where high expectations and academic rigor are the norm. The staff effectively uses data for informing instruction and monitoring performance and progress for all students. Teachers use their well-developed skills in data analysis to prepare differentiated activities for their classes. The principal is planning to expand conferencing sessions to foster greater academic insight and gains. Grade teams meet twice each week, reviewing progress, creating relevant rubrics, sharing ideas, planning cooperatively and assisting less experienced colleagues. Administrators and support staff assist each grade team in their efforts.

In response to last year’s Quality Review the school has improved its tracking of student progress and performance. Analysis of data indicates that the school is making progress on State examinations in English language arts, math, social studies and science. There has been a reduction in the number of Level 1 and Level 2 students in these content area examinations. Struggling students, identified by their teachers, receive additional academic support in “Safety Net” classes before and after school. Across all grades, curriculum maps with pacing calendars, aligned with State standards, are accelerating the learning process. There is more to do in order to share and reinforce school goals and high expectations.

The principal has increased the number of student enrichment activities. Many new outside partnerships provide outlets for student self-expression, creativity, recreation and academic enrichment. These programs, along with the rich academic program, are enabling many students to move on to specialized middle school programs.

The inquiry team is fully functional. Staff members, trained by the team to use the ARIS and Acuity programs, are gathering and assessing student data. The team is currently following 15 students performing below grade level expectations, with the goal of improving their outcomes by one and a half years by June 2008.

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 staff effectively gathers assessment data from the Acuity program as well as other formal and informal sources, to gain understanding of how their students are performing and progressing. Teachers are very skilled in using data to address instructional practices and designing differentiated lesson activities in response to the varied needs of their students. Teachers incorporate conference log information into their assessment binders, which they use to guide their strategic planning to differentiate instruction for their students. Data is effectively used to identify student strengths and weaknesses as well as identifying students who are struggling. The principal recognizes the need to extend the conferencing sessions to address the needs of students in subjects other than English language arts in order to further gauge student understanding across subject areas.

The administrative team has highly effective procedures in place to regularly review the performance and progress of special education students, English language learners, students by gender and ethnicity as well as holdovers and students in collaborative team teaching classes. The team has effective practices to compare their school with schools in their peer horizon and local district schools. Data indicates the school is making steady longitudinal growth with excellent progress on State examinations last year. The school is performing at a higher level than most of its peer and district schools. Staff members are currently visiting peer schools to observe best practices and sharing their observations with colleagues during grade planning sessions and at faculty conferences.

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.

The high level of collaboration among all staff members leads to the creation of whole school, grade, and class goals, which are challenging, rigorous and aligned to realistic benchmarks and timeframes. The administrative team regularly monitors these goals for their level of achievement. The principal meets with grade teams on a set schedule to assess grade, class and student progress. The "Safety Net" program addresses the needs of students performing below grade level expectations who receive targeted small group assistance both before and after school. The administrative team assesses the progress of these students every six to eight weeks. Teachers pay careful attention to higher achieving students by encouraging high expectations and providing rigorous differentiated academic lessons within their classes.

The principal clearly communicates information about the school goals and high expectations for achievement through ongoing communication strategies, such as her monthly newsletter that highlights important activities and items of interest at the school. The school invites parents to participate in workshops, orientation nights, curriculum

nights, open school events, parent-teacher conferences, celebrations, and the parent-teacher association. Parents are successfully encouraged to provide information that helps with educational decisions regarding their children. The school informs parents about student progress through a detailed report card narrative. The principal plans to build on this by developing more strategies in which to communicate high expectations and school goals to parents..

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 school uses the City curriculum in all core subjects. The English language arts program employs best practices from the Teachers College literacy program. Curriculum maps, pacing calendars, benchmarks and timeframes are used across the school and serve as a guide for all staff members. This teaching and learning continuum enables each teacher to effectively plan for the different learning styles in their classes. The principal holds teachers accountable for the high quality of their instruction, use of data, lesson plans, and ongoing class work and achievement levels achieved by their students through rigorous monitoring procedures. Administrators conduct daily walkthroughs to observe staff relationships with students, the focus of instruction and monitoring student outcomes. The staff uses effective practices within their grade teams to develop grade goals, examine data, create stimulating activities, projects and rubrics that actively engage students in their learning. The school does not uniformly use conferencing sessions, in subjects other than English language arts, in order to assess individual learning needs and styles.

All staff members use differentiated instructional and learning techniques in their classes. Teachers have many opportunities through highly effective professional development activities to enhance their skills. Students are actively engaged in differentiated lessons, well designed to accommodate their different learning styles. These activities, well supported by work samples, rubrics and effective teacher modeling, lead to improved student outcomes. High quality management systems are in place to control the budget, staffing and scheduling decisions that support the needs of the students. This year the principal underwrote a three-day educational visit to Washington, D.C. for all grade 5 students and a trip to the Poconos for the lower grades with the goal of widening their life experiences.

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.

The well-designed professional development program adeptly focuses on the needs of students, as well as the skills, strengths and any deficits of the staff. Teachers meet with administrators to discuss and plan their professional needs for the year. All staff, but especially new staff members and teachers who experience difficulties, are provided with a professional development plan. The principal meets with the targeted group of

teachers on a regular basis to review individual progress and the effectiveness of the plan. A comprehensive professional development calendar, which offers many opportunities to attend conferences, visit peer horizon schools, participate in many in-school activities, is issued in September for planning purposes. Voluntary "Lunch and Learn" sessions and staff selected readings on professional topics enhance the highly effective professional development program.

The administrators are highly visible as they conduct daily walkthroughs to observe classroom practices. The principal and assistant principal observe teachers, both formally and informally, on a regular basis. Staff members receive immediate constructive feedback after each visit and written reports in a timely fashion. A staff member stated, "I have a sense of self worth after these visits." Intervisitations are encouraged and supported to help staff learn from skilled senior colleagues. New teachers are effectively supported by class visits and mentoring activities. They are mentored by a highly skilled, experienced staff member and the principal meets with each new teacher twice a month to review their progress.

Collaboration with outside partnerships has increased during the principal's tenure. There are many new programs that provide outlets for self-expression, creativity, recreation and academic enrichment including a second grade swim program conducted by the Dodge YMCA during school hours which is designed to teach inner-city youth to swim at an early age.

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.

School plans, the Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal's goals and objectives define procedures for monitoring overall school performance outcomes. Effective rigorous benchmarks and timeframes are set and regularly reviewed for their level of attainment. Each grade team analyzes performance data as a guide for further enhancing classroom instructional practices. The staff reviews interim assessments, State exam results, lesson plans, assessment binders and conferencing logs in order to determine student, class and grade progress. These activities are enabling the school to show steady growth and raise the achievement levels of all students, particularly those who are performing below grade level expectations. The staff is empowered to make adjustments in the curriculum and pacing calendars in order to meet achievement levels as outlined in the benchmarks and timeframes.

The administrators very effectively review class outcomes, monitoring binders in order to get a picture of overall school progress. The principal regularly meets with each teacher to review the formative and summative data, discuss class progress, student outcomes and next steps for forward movement. Interim progress report information is well used to make timely adjustments and modifications to improve teaching and learning. The principal and members of the school community have a clear vision for the future of The Pacific School. It includes further development of stringent procedures and systems to monitor the school's progress in reaching its goals and objectives by raising students' performance level outcomes.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME:	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 rigorous, 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 and tardiness?				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, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				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