



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Vincent D. Grippo School

Elementary School 069

**6302 9 Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11220**

Principal: Jaynemie Capetanakis

Dates of review: October 17 - 18, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Helen Donnellan

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Vincent D. Grippo School is an elementary school with 819 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 14% Hispanic, 11% White, and 74% Asian students. The student body includes 52% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 96%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 with 92% eligibility.

The school opened in 2002 in a new building which was built to accommodate 500 students, including pre-kindergarten classes. Since then the numbers of students have increased to over 800 and the pre-kindergarten class areas have been used to accommodate the increased numbers of students in higher grades since 2005. The numbers of students in kindergarten classes are capped to limit further overcrowding. This limits the number of kindergarten classes to three and proposals may lead to capping of student numbers in grades 2 and 3 to overcome even more overcrowding. A contingency plan allows zoned students to have seats at another nearby elementary school.

The school building is barrier-free which means that the small number of students with limited mobility can access all the school's facilities. There are three self-contained classes for special education students and one CTT class.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The administration and staff have a shared focus of improving instruction and learning outcomes.
- The principal has increased the effect of professional development by providing a school-wide menu of learning to improve instruction.
- Creative and performing arts are fully integrated into the curriculum for all grades, which enable students to develop well holistically.
- A purposeful learning atmosphere exists throughout the school, within which students and staff show high respect for each other.
- Effective procedures enable the school to run smoothly, even though more than 800 students are taught in a building designed for 500.
- Partnerships with cultural and community-based organizations result in highly productive programs, which students enjoy and enable them to make good progress.
- The school gathers extensive data on students, which gives a clear picture of their progress and performance in core subjects.
- Administration and staff work together well to plan successful programs for instruction and intervention.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend data analysis to provide greater insights into the progress and performance of different groups of students, to maximize their progress.
- Continue to develop assessments to track learning outcomes in creative and performing arts.
- Extend data gathering and analysis by integrating technology more fully into the school's existing systems, ensuring its utilization to plan for instruction and differentiate learning further.

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 Vincent D. Grippo School includes arts, technology and science in the curriculum for all students. Students speak more than 11 languages with the main languages being Chinese, Spanish, English and Korean. Regardless of their home language or educational background, every student is fully included in school life. Special education students work alongside those in general education which makes clear that diversity is respected. Great efforts are made to encourage students to continue their learning at home, through homework and loans of laptop computers. Workshops for parents enable them to learn about the curriculum and English language classes help them improve their own English.

Building the school's capacity to improve is the principal's overall focus for the year. This is being achieved through professional development which is integral to school routines. Teachers learn from each other and experts from outside the school. The school is committed to improvement which reflects the positive actions taken since the last Quality Review.

To ensure that students and teachers are able to keep up-to-date with advances in technology, the original computers were recently upgraded. The entire building is equipped for wireless connection. However, the school recognizes that computers can be used to better effect in the gathering and analysis of data. The progress made by students in creative arts is tracked through innovative uses of adapted rubrics, which have been piloted as part of the Blueprint for the Arts.

The school's plans include contingency planning for changing student numbers as well as ensuring that all students continue to learn and develop. School leaders maintain a careful balance between these issues. The issue of over-crowding is not allowed to limit the school's approach to its work, but it is a real concern. Ingenuity and staff adaptability allows instruction to continue in hallways and small rooms.

Extensive student data is gathered but is not yet used to gain a full understanding of differences in learning outcomes for different groups of students. This is one area being considered by the recently established inquiry team. The data analyst on the team also provides training so staff can understand and benefit from ARIS data.

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.

This school collects extensive standardized data, informal teacher assessments and ongoing records on the progress and performance of all students. This gives staff a clear picture of what students can and cannot do in subjects and within separate strands of those subjects. The principal is skilled at analyzing this data and presenting it to staff in easily understood formats so they are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Comparisons are

made between classes and to track the progress students make from year to year, which gives insights into strengths in students' learning outcomes and instruction.

Teachers' running records and notes from conferences with students, are detailed and updated regularly so accurate information on progress is always available. However, the school misses opportunities to use computer technology to support this process. The progress of special education students is similarly tracked and relates to the students' individual education plan goals and progress in curriculum areas. Comparisons of test scores shows that English language learners do not progress at the same rate as other students. The school does not undertake in-depth analysis to identify differences between some groups and sub-groups of students. Due to this, the school is unaware of some of the factors or influences that cause differences. The school has highlighted the differences in learning outcomes for boys and girls.

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.

High importance is given to collaborative working. All teachers have three periods each week for grade team meetings where they use data to relate curriculum maps to the needs of students in each class. They are skilled at adapting the content of classes to meet the needs of their students within the requirements of the program. They make effective use of analyzed assessment data to identify and plan support for students. This early intervention means that difficulties or delays in learning can be overcome at an early stage and minimizes more significant delays in later years. Data analysis makes clear that some English language learners are not passing State tests, partly due to the short time in the country before they are required to take tests. The school plans ongoing strategies to support students who are at risk. Class and cluster teachers do not work in isolation; they regularly share information and work closely to support students effectively.

Teachers make good use of conferences with individual students to evaluate progress and make the student aware of their next goal for learning. Teachers use post-it notes to share goals with students well. This method is non-threatening and allows students to transfer these notes from one piece of work to the next. Students are clear about their goals and how to achieve them, and the post-it notes prompt them to apply the skill or knowledge in all relevant subjects.

Staff work hard to keep parents informed of the curriculum and how well students are progressing. Workshops introduce new parents to the structure of school assessments and give them insights into teaching approaches that the students will use through the year. In addition, there is an extensive program to support families with little or no English through weekend and daytime language classes. Parents share information with the school regularly and show a high level of commitment to the school, reflected in their words, "Our children are our hope."

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.

Teachers encourage students from the outset to see themselves not as students, but as writers, authors, artists, pianists, painters, potters, mathematicians and scientists, which sets the tone for learning through a broad, engaging curriculum. Since the school opened, technology and creative arts have been an integral aspect of the curriculum and are now securely established across all grades. The facilities for practical work, especially in science, enable students to have regular practical classes and investigate for themselves, which supports them in their academic work very well. The positive impact of this approach is demonstrated through the school's achievement in science which has even greater significance when the high numbers of English language learners is taken into account.

The broad curriculum is not seen as just enriching the core subjects, but as delivering a wide education to students so they develop as well-rounded young people. Cluster teachers work closely with class teachers in all grades to deliver art, music and science classes as part of the regular curriculum for every student. In music, the curriculum covers composing, appreciation and performance, with a wide choice of woodwind and string instruments available for students. The school is richly decorated with student art work, which shows a wide range of media used to create two and three-dimensional art in all grades. Visits to museums and galleries enable students to experience the work of recognized artists which they use to generate their own artwork with skill and care.

The school records extensive information on student progress and performance in the core subjects, but is less rigorous in assessment in creative arts. As a result, the relative levels of students' strengths are not formally known in arts subjects. Staff are aware of this inconsistency and initial work has started to address this in which students evaluate their own and each others' work. Teachers do not use art data fully to differentiate instruction in all classes, which reduces the opportunities for some students to progress at the best rate.

Each academic year, the school loans a lap-top computer to every grade 4 and 5 student for use at home and school, which allows them to practice their skills and use technology for research and recording work. As a result, they develop skills and confidence through extended use of technology.

Students are purposeful as they move around the building and show high levels of respect to each other and their work. The art studio's code of conduct, for example, makes this explicit, "I respect my work and the work of others." This is particularly noteworthy in the context of student numbers being three hundred higher than the school's intended occupancy level.

The school actively encourages the calm atmosphere and low noise levels, so students working in open hallways are not disturbed.

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 an integral part of school life and the vehicle for improving instruction. Teachers are considered as ongoing learners in developing their work. The principal identified that teachers did not always share or apply learning from external professional development, which was considered an ineffective use of resources. In its place she has instigated a school-wide program to bring expertise to the school so that all staff are trained directly at a level appropriate to their class or subject. As a result, staff are able to deliver actions necessary to implement required changes in line with school priorities. Additionally staff indicate their personal learning needs to coaches who work with them to address these in classroom contexts. In this way, the school offers staff a wide menu of professional development to meet the varying needs of staff.

Every newly-hired teacher is matched to an experienced teacher at the school, who mentors and supports their colleague using a positive approach. The mentors are regarded as “a safe haven” so that the new teachers can ask any question without feeling inadequate. Observing colleagues forms part of the new teacher induction program as well as taking place between other staff. This recognizes the expertise within the staff and allows strengths to be effectively shared in an open way.

Procedures are so well known by staff and students that the overcrowded school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. For example, the school actively encourages the calm atmosphere and low noise levels, so students working in open hallways are not disturbed.

The school has established extensive partnerships with cultural and community-based organizations to enhance the curriculum and provide support to students and their families. Some support the delivery of the curriculum while others extended day activities and weekend activities for families, all of which contribute to effective instruction.

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.

Whole-school goals are stated in the principal’s performance review and the district’s priorities for improvement. These are embodied in the shared focus of increasing students’ learning through improving instruction which is evident throughout the school. Whilst plans for bringing about improvement lack specific interim goals, progress towards completion of the whole plan is continually monitored by the cabinet to ensure that actions are “on-track” to bring about improvement. The implementation of plans is delegated to appropriate grades and the coaches monitor progress closely to confirm the effectiveness of actions. Assessment results and teachers ongoing records of progress are key to this and ensure that changes are based upon evidence rather than intuition. Where changes are necessary, these are made promptly and discretely, which results in little disruption for students.

With the high number of students, the administration is continually reflecting upon plans for annual projected student numbers. Changes to class sizes and teacher allocations are annually reviewed to meet the needs of the growing population. The focus of this planning is on zoned students returning from temporary sites at other schools and assimilating into PS 69.

The principal carries forward Vincent D. Grippo’s vision for the school and works hard with her colleagues to ensure that all students can access the arts, technology and science as part of their learning. Her challenge is to find ways of achieving that with the high number of students in the building.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Vincent D. Grippo (PS 69)	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 make 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	