



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Public School/Intermediate School 109**

**Elementary-Intermediate School 109**

**1001 East 45 Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11203**

**Principal: Denise Talley-Bennett**

**Dates of review: September 26 - 28, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Alan Boyle**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

PS/IS 109 is a combined elementary and intermediate school with 798 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 82% Black, 17% Hispanic and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 12.5% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92.5%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 95% eligibility

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The highly sophisticated process for tracking student achievement provides rapid analysis with precision.
- Reliable data informs planning so that teachers take swift action to improve the progress of those students with greatest needs.
- A robust system collects interim and periodic assessments in the core curriculum that leaders use effectively to monitor plans and interventions.
- Teachers appreciate the support provided by the school and they are readily accountable for students' progress in learning.
- The school uses its resources effectively because it bases all strategic decisions on reliable data.
- There are excellent systems in place to help students modify their behavior successfully.
- The principal and her administration help teachers to improve instruction continuously through careful observation and support.
- There are excellent procedures to nurture and support teachers new to the school.
- Guidance counselors and other school services support students extremely well, helping them to reach academic and personal goals.
- Teachers and support services apply clear procedures consistently to deal effectively with discipline related incidents.

### What the school needs to improve

- Accelerate the academic progress of English language learners.
- Make data collection less time consuming by enabling teachers to manipulate it electronically.
- Develop classroom instruction with greater precision by introducing more differentiated activities to match the detailed assessments of students' prior learning.
- Explore further ways to enrich the curriculum so that students have additional opportunities to develop their unique talents.

## 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.**

PS/IS 109 is an exciting place to be. It has now established a dynamic equilibrium after several years of rapid growth, re-location and change. Continuous improvement characterizes its new stability. There is clear evidence that the school has improved in all five areas identified by the last Quality Review. All members of the administration team have clear roles and responsibilities. The school has fully assimilated grades 6 through 8. A new program for social studies is in place. Students use computers in all classrooms. Displays featuring achievements by African-Americans are prominent around the school.

Leaders analyze achievement data in many ways to check the progress made by all students. Through this analysis the school discovered that English language learners were making slower progress than other students. The administration sets goals and swiftly mobilizes resources. Teachers work well together, regularly sharing expertise and lesson plans, helping all students move towards their academic and personal goals. While teacher assessments track students' progress with great precision, some teachers do not differentiate learning activities sufficiently to fully stretch all students' learning.

The school works hard to enrich the core curriculum with engaging activities so that students enjoy learning. They would, however, appreciate more ways to discover and display their unique talents. The principal and her administration are highly skilled in identifying ways for teachers to improve instruction. They carefully nurture new teachers who learn their craft through focused support from more experienced colleagues. Well-developed systems across the school ensure consistency within grades and continuity between them.

The school is data rich. Electronic systems make it easier to collect and manipulate data. The School Wide Information System (SWIS) picks out hotspots around the school where students need help to modify their behavior. Guidance counselors make sensitive interventions to support students. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) works well to grade 5. Students and teachers are exploring ways to extend this approach to the higher grades.

Honest and rigorous discussions about data inform self-evaluation. The whole school community engages in this activity. By openly embracing all points of view, the principal achieves a more reliable evaluation. It also helps to share a clear vision for the next level of improvement that people are likely to follow.

The inquiry team has not yet had their first meeting.

## **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 well-established systems to collect a wide variety of student achievement data. Improvements have continued since the last Quality Review. The data specialist holds all test scores and related information in an electronic format. She analyzes it, using pivot tables, to produce immediate reports. They show all possible combinations of gender, ethnicity, English language learners and special education students. There system has the ability to integrate additional data such as date of birth.

This sophisticated manipulation of data is impressive. It provides a constantly updated picture of the progress of any group of students that the school wants to track. Achievement data reveals that English language learners are not making sufficient progress. The school has developed a plan of action to deal with this issue.

The principal has established a school wide protocol for gathering and reporting data. Teachers collect a wide range of student achievement data in their assessment binders. Progress is tracked through a format, which builds an overall profile of each student as they move through the school. This process is time consuming and teachers have not received sufficient training or support in the use of this system.

**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.**

Collaboration is a well-developed feature of the school. Teachers meet in grades, faculties and other special groupings to share information about students' progress. For example, grade 5 teachers met to review the analysis of individual item scores in the social studies test. This detailed and focused activity revealed strengths and areas for further development. The school reached action by consensus and recorded its intentions. This is typical of the very effective way that the school plans, in fine detail, how to improve the progress of underachieving individuals or groups of students.

The school's high expectations extend well beyond students' academic progress. There is a clear expectation of the highest standards of student behavior and appearance. Parents share these expectations, as evidenced by students' smart appearance and adherence to the dress code. Despite the difficulties caused by the physical distance between the school and the students' home community, school leaders go out of their way to engage with parents. Since the last Quality Review, the parent coordinator has arranged to meet parents in venues located in their own neighborhood. Parents are satisfied with the information they receive about their children's progress at school.

**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 adapt very good resources imaginatively to teach the core curriculum. All classrooms have excellent support materials that ensure consistency across grades and continuity between grades. This includes new programs recently introduced for social studies and science. All pacing calendars include interim and periodic assessments. Teachers collect high quality and timely data throughout the year. This robust system provides clear expectations for all teachers and they are readily accountable for students’ progress. While teachers have finely tuned data about what students know and can do, some teachers do not match classroom instruction with the same precision. They do not differentiate learning activities sufficiently well to enable all students to progress at their own pace.

The school enriches the curriculum in many ways so that students can reach their academic and personal goals. For example, students in grades 6 through 8 learned how to handle stop motion animation and cartoons in the computer lab. A very successful partnership with the community based organization Puppetry in Practice led to the creation of stunning, life-sized puppets made from recycled materials. The culmination of this project was a parade for the whole school community. Students value these opportunities highly and express a desire to have even more opportunities to develop their unique talents.

Strategic planning is outstanding because it is based on reliable data. Consequently, the school gets the best value from all its resources.

The school has implemented Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) successfully. It provides excellent structures that work especially well from kindergarten through grade 5. Students learn how to modify their behavior through simple approaches that everyone can follow. Staff apply them consistently across the school and in all situations where students interact with each other and adults. Older students are working with teachers on ways to extend its impact. The school works hard to develop mutual trust and respect between staff and students. Consequently, most students are eager to learn and are very proud of their school.

**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 principal is a strong leader who has managed a remarkable transformation from a small elementary school, in a former warehouse, to a complex learning community on a brand new site with first class facilities. The principal displays a resolute commitment to the highest possible standards of learning, for both teachers and students. Consequently, she is building strong leadership capacity across the school.

The principal and her administration team make frequent formal and informal classroom observations to monitor the quality of learning. Careful observations inform discussions and lead to sensitive support that helps teachers to improve instruction. There are many

opportunities for teachers to share good practice and learn from each other. The school has recently recruited many new teachers as it has added another grade each year. There are excellent procedures in place to support new teachers, especially those new to the profession. Teachers gratefully acknowledge the support they receive.

Students speak highly of the personal support provided by their teachers and guidance counselors. Guidance counselors carefully study detailed analysis of all referrals and minor incidents, through the School Wide Information System (SWIS). They take suitable action and this targeted support for students, informed by reliable data, has led to a dramatic reduction in incidents.

**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 principal and her administration skillfully combine information from analysis of student outcomes, in terms of academic progress and improved behavior, with information from lesson observations. Collaboration and discussion reveal patterns in the data. Leaders use the patterns in the data to drive decisions with regard to general aspects of professional development as well as specific support needed to help individual teachers. For example, the school purchased the Rigby Literacy Program to support balanced literacy in kindergarten through grade 5. The administration team soon realized that modifications were necessary after combining periodic assessments with information from classroom observations. While the new program provided more structure to balanced literacy, it did not allow teachers sufficient opportunities to engage students in higher level critical thinking. The school arranged professional development using *Strategies that Work* by Harvey and Goudvis. This enabled teachers to move to higher levels of instruction.

Evaluation always involves collaboration and this is a well-developed feature. For example, when preparing the self-evaluation for this Quality Review, the principal discussed a draft at a faculty conference involving the whole staff of the school. Staff worked in small groups, each with a specific Quality Statement to review. This was how the self-evaluation grew into such a detailed and highly informative document. Most importantly, because the whole staff was involved, it enabled the Quality Reviewer to resolve conflicting evidence presented by the Learning Environment Survey.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Public School/Intermediate School 109</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				X	

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .</b>	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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				X	

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .</b>	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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				X	