



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Alexine A Fenty School**

**Elementary School 139**

**330 Rugby Road  
Brooklyn  
NY 11226**

**Principal: Mary McDonald**

**Dates of review: March 18 - 20, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Peter Lewis**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Alexine A Fenty School is an elementary school with 1125 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 43% Black, 30% Hispanic, 8.5% White, and 18% Asian students. The student body includes 25% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 94.3%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 79% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders have rapidly developed their use of a wide range of assessment information to understand learning.
- Goals for student achievement are accurately set in relation to their prior learning, and progress towards their achievement is monitored well.
- Support and intervention services are highly effective in raising the achievement of the lowest-performing students.
- Special education students are very well supported and, as a result, make very good gains in learning and in physical and emotional development.
- The curriculum is effectively planned, modified according to identified needs and enhanced by good and developing enrichment programs.
- Improvements in literacy and math have been facilitated by a strong team of coaches who have a good understanding of learning.
- Parents are fully involved as partners in their children's education, and are full of praise for the way in which continued learning is promoted.
- School development is well planned, and driven by very strong professional relationships and high quality of teamwork.

### What the school needs to improve

- Identify the expected characteristics of good teaching and learning, and of differentiation, and train staff in their consistent application in all lessons.
- Ensure a consistent match of teachers' planning to the range of students' needs and abilities in all lessons.
- Build on established best practice to ensure consistency in teachers' recording of conference notes and running records of student progress.
- Improve the evaluation of all monitoring activities by focusing more closely on the impact of teachers' planning on student learning.

## 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.**

This is a successful school that provides a stimulating curriculum for its students. As a result students are well motivated and have a high level of interest in learning. The principal has ensured not only that professional development is well focused on identified needs, but also reinforced by the careful development of teamwork. This has led to a clear sense of collaboration throughout the school. The rapid development of teachers' understanding of data, for example, has been successful because of the good systems of support and regular discussions that facilitated its introduction.

Senior staff make good use of data. They analyze the performance of students as individuals and groups, as well as the comparative performance of classes and subjects, and use the information well to set goals for students and the whole school, and to track progress towards success. This is an improvement from the time of the school's last Quality Review, as is the use of data to measure students' progress over time and to modify goals where necessary. Good progress has also been made in developing teachers' skills in planning differentiated work, and there are now very good examples of practice that the school is using to "set the standard" for all teachers. The lack of agreement as to the expected features of highly effective lessons and the characteristics of differentiation means that progress in this area has not been as rapid as the school had hoped. Parents rightly feel welcomed in the school, and know that their opinions are valued. Particularly close communication is maintained with parents of special education students and those whose performance is causing concern, but the school has taken care to ensure ongoing contact with all its families. Very good communication is developing as a result of parents' involvement in shaping the direction of the school, such as in their collaboration with teachers to plan a very successful science evening.

The school's inquiry team is a strong feature in the school's developing understanding of data. The identification of current and former English language learners is sensible given the school's analysis of dips in performance among these groups, and the information gained is shared well across the school. Leaders make good use of the results of observations of teaching to identify strengths and areas for development. These, however, are more focused on classroom practice than on specific aspects of learning, which means that interventions are not always planned as rapidly as the school would wish.

## **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 has a very good knowledge of the performance of all students that it draws from thorough analysis of different streams of achievement data. During the past year, there has been a very strong focus on the development of accessible and relevant data. This has helped senior staff to develop a very clear picture of patterns of learning across subjects. In addition to centrally held records, the school now uses assessment binders for each class, which are updated regularly and provide a good degree of uniformity across the school. The principal and other leaders make good use of this information, together with clear spreadsheets of student performance, to inform discussion with teachers. As a result, shared understanding of areas of strength and weakness in students' learning is well established. At the same time, comparisons of students' performance across classes and subjects are used well to identify aspects of teachers' performance that may require support or improvement. Teachers keep track of student performance through the use of conference notes and running records. However, the fact that the school has yet to agree on a unified format for these prevents leaders from easily monitoring their quality.

The school's analysis of the performance of both English language learners and special education students is comprehensive and accurate. The analysis of regular testing, for example, enables the school to closely monitor the rate at which special education students are achieving their individualized targets. There is a good understanding of the progress of English language learners and that made by different ethnic groups, particularly students with Hispanic backgrounds. This has proven valuable in identifying common features of underperformance and in planning interventions to address these. The senior team has been proactive in training and supporting teachers in the use and interpretation of data. The school has accurately evaluated the efficacy of its work in this area and has good and continuing plans in place to build the confidence of other staff, particularly in using data to plan for differentiated instruction.

**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.**

Leaders have a good understanding of student performance, which they use to set goals for future performance at the start of each year based on analysis of the previous years' results. The accurate identification of students whose performance is causing concern at the start of each year, for example, drives intervention planning and sets a baseline against which students' progress is monitored. Very good collaboration between coaches, senior and support staff and teachers provides a strong focus on the achievement and needs of students of all abilities while, at the same time, embedding a good understanding of high expectations. Parents are well informed, and are active as partners in their children's education. They value the improved level of communication

that they have about their children's progress, particularly from the academic intervention service team. Administrators and coaches have a clear view of the aspects of their areas of responsibility that require modification or development and use this awareness to make informed decisions based on students' needs. A particularly strong feature of the school's practice is the connection it has established between annual whole school goals for improvement and the longer-term plan that outlines planned developments over the next five years. As a result, staff have a good understanding of key priorities, such as improving the quality of teachers' planning to enable effective differentiation.

**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 has reviewed its curriculum to ensure that it fully aligns with requirements, while meeting students' identified needs. A great deal of work has gone into the development of high quality, detailed curriculum maps which identify fixed elements of required learning. The school is making good use of its literacy pacing calendar to refine the progression of learning in other subjects and to further develop planned links between subjects. These features provide good support for teachers to ensure that their planning reflects what students are expected to know at different points in the year. Data from, for example, interim testing accurately identifies the progress that students are making. As a result, interventions are planned in a timely manner and have a positive impact on student achievement. The very good range of regularly updated whole school and class-based information provides the basis for teachers' accountability in relation to their students' learning as, increasingly, do cross-grade meetings. A very good model of conference notation and running records has been developed by the English coach, which is being used in some classes. This has the potential to further refine teachers' understanding of the detail of student progress, but the school has yet to ensure its consistent application in all classes. The launch of a collaborative team teaching class for each grade has made a very positive contribution to the progress made by students. There is high level of challenge in these classes, in which teachers plan activities that consistently set high and different expectations for students of all capabilities. Leaders acknowledge that this is not consistent across the school and, in response, have made a good start in using these more effective classes in modeling expected practice. The school has, however, not yet established its expectations of the characteristics of good teaching and learning, or of differentiation, which means that teachers are not universally aware of the areas of their own practice that would benefit from development.

**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 school uses comprehensive observations of instruction, coupled with its good analysis of student data, to create a clear picture of aspects of its work that are

successful, and where improvement is needed. However these observations are not yet sufficiently focused on the impact of what teachers do in relation to what students learn. This means that the identification of developing trends in student achievement are not always as timely as they might be. Coaches and assistant principals are closely involved in discussion and in planning development and support. Information from these is analyzed well so that there is a good understanding of consistency in teachers' practice. This has led to the rapid development of teachers' skills in, for example, making use of data and improving literacy and math teaching. The school has begun to consider ways to make more precise links between teachers' practice and its impact on student learning, having recognized the need to focus more closely on this aspect of its work.

The principal has ensured that regular opportunities are provided for collaborative planning that are well facilitated by coaches and administrators. Meetings within and across grades enable teachers to share ideas and strategies, which are reinforced by the good range of opportunities that are available to observe their colleagues in the classroom. Teachers describe the "wealth of opportunity" for professional development and the degree to which, for example, it has raised their understanding of the importance of data in their planning. Throughout the school, there is a high degree of professional respect and a strong commitment to helping students achieve their potential. The administration and other leaders are seen as part of the team, and are respected for their professional expertise. As a result, teachers readily seek and accept their advice.

**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.**

Using well-focused monitoring and good evaluation, the school has accurately identified areas for improvement in student learning and in teachers' practice, which have been the subject of plans to secure improvement. Students' goals are carefully monitored and, through the good use of interim assessment and teachers' developing use of conferencing skills, the school is able to implement modifications when their progress appears to be slipping. Teachers receive very good support from academic intervention staff to identify areas where students need extra help, and in providing support in such a way that ensures accelerated progress. As a result, programs and interventions, particularly for the lowest-achieving students and those whose performance is causing concern, are tailored closely to their developing needs and capabilities. Leaders understand students' different starting points well, and use this information well to assess individual students' potential. The school is able to ensure that progress, particularly for lower-achieving students, is monitored accurately.

The school uses its accurate analysis of student data to set and monitor its goals for whole school improvement. Monitoring systems are well established and outcomes are actively discussed to develop the school's understanding of what is working and of its progress towards achieving strategic goals. Data provides school leaders with a good understanding of patterns and rates of student performance.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Alexine A Fenty School</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				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.**

<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	

**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>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.**

<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	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	

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					X

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>