



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Public School 141**

**Elementary-Middle School 141**

**655 Parkside Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11226**

**Principal: Arthur Fusco**

**Dates of review: January 23 - 24, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Ronnie Solow**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Public School 141 is a District 75 special education school with 381 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 10. The school population comprises 55% Black, 33% Hispanic, 9% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 71% of the students enrolled and girls account for 29%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 81.4%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school is situated in four shared buildings in Brooklyn and serves students with academic and behavioral management needs that interfere with their ability to learn. Specialized instruction with necessary supports, assistive technology and mandated related services are provided to improve the learning and behavioral outcomes for all students in the school.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is a knowledgeable special educator who leads the school with a strong academic emphasis.
- The principal and staff work collegially to promote improved learning outcomes for all students.
- Student performance outcomes are well measured using multiple varied assessments to determine progress and appropriateness of services.
- Uniformity of instruction, differentiated learning and positive behavioral expectations are effectively promoted in the classrooms.
- Classrooms fully incorporate data-driven best practices for students with handicapping conditions.
- Professional development is based on need, skill, interest and experience and has a very positive impact on the quality of instruction and on student progress.
- Students are treated with full respect and encouraged to reach their full potential.
- Effective monitoring of student performance, with interim revisions, contributes to increasing performance outcomes.
- Classrooms and hallways exhibit high quality rubrics, standards and student work samples demonstrating a broad, engaging curriculum.
- Budget, staffing and scheduling decisions are effectively based on student needs.

### What the school needs to improve

- Extend the disaggregation and analysis of performance data to assess the progress of all groups in the school.
- Further compare data longitudinally to evaluate the progress of different cohorts of students over time.
- Build upon present strategies to increase parental involvement in the school life of their children.

## 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.**

Public School 141 is a community with a culture of high expectations and the will to assist each student in reaching their fullest potential. The principal and administrative team work collegially and collaboratively with the staff, motivating them to engage in shared strategizing, planning and implementation sessions. Students are well known across sites, enabling the teachers, related service and paraprofessional staff members to share and utilize the information gathered from the individual education plans, standard assessments, alternate assessments, and informal data sources. This important information strengthens the specific, personalized education program for each emotionally challenged, mentally retarded, autistic, developmentally delayed or multiply handicapped student.

A finely tuned data collection system propels the instructional program. School-created data collection sheets, rubrics and protocols insure equity across classes, grades and sites for data collection, analysis and differentiation of instruction. Performance levels for students in English language arts and math have risen, resulting in increased numbers of students returning to community schools. The school regularly outperforms other schools in its cohort. Attendance, impacted by busing and medically fragile students, is not yet at the desired level.

The school addressed the issues identified in the last Quality Review. The English language arts curriculum guide now includes an extensive list of culturally representative books for all grade levels. The school does not analyze data for gender or all of the ethnic groups to assess their progress, but it does so around special education classification. Common planning time for staff, within and across sites, addresses specific issues and topics. Staff empowerment, achieved through the formation of committees, resulted in the development of units of study, teacher mentors and the hiring of school-based teachers as literacy, math and technology coaches. Assistant principals were given more discretion and latitude in running other sites with stringent reporting procedures. The principal recognizes that data is not analyzed longitudinally, especially for students in the standardized assessment program, to assess student progress over time. In addition, the school realizes that some parents are not sufficiently involved in school life.

The inquiry team is fully operational. The team created parent, student and staff surveys to identify apparent needs. Through an action research project, they are studying 15 students performing at Level 1 in English language arts who receive specific targeted instruction. As an added component of the study, the team created a well-designed rubric for observing these students.

## **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 gathers many forms of data for every student, class and grade. State examinations, Scantron results, predictive assessments, and the information from other data-driven commercial programs provide teachers with information about student achievement. Teacher-made assessments and conference notes in English language arts, math, science and social studies are additional sources of high quality data. Students in the alternate assessment programs are evaluated using the Brigance method, Behavioral Characteristics Progression, and/or the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning. Assistive technology information, used to address the communication needs of non-verbal students, is also included. For both categories, this information is effectively incorporated into the teacher's data binder. The extensive range of assessments and related services information are well used to generate the individual learning goals for each student.

English language learners receive instruction in bilingual or English as a second language programs. The bilingual teachers adapt books into Spanish and use picture symbols, chants and songs to provide excellent instruction through a multi-sensory approach. The school makes a careful analysis of specific cohorts of students in each special education classification and collects and analyses additional data in the areas of attendance, behavior and movement to least restrictive environment which enables staff to spot patterns and trends. However, the principal recognizes that the school does not compare data for each cohort of students as they move from grade to grade or analyze data by gender and for all ethnic groups to assess the progress of each group.

**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 Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal's goals and objectives set the benchmarks for the school. Each plan contains measurable outcomes and a timetable for attaining the goals. The individual education plan for each student prescribes the specific procedures and accommodations for every student. Differentiated instruction, supported by multiple intelligence assessment and data from the learning styles inventory, academic targets, behavior and emotional growth and development are included in goal setting conferences attended by the teacher, an administrator and related service providers four times per year. Teachers meet during common planning sessions with coaches or assistant principals to set goals, plan curriculum, or address issues and concerns. This ensures that best practices for handicapped students are incorporated into every classroom. Committees, composed of staff from different sites, assist in the development of the Comprehensive Education Plan, excellent curriculum

guides and pacing calendars. High quality, targeted academic intervention services include all students in the standardized assessment program through individual and small needs-based groups, both during and after school.

Parents receive information about student goals and objectives through various conferences, report cards, workshops and meetings, as well as celebrations and fairs. Project Genesis, the behavior modification program, reports weekly progress that is logged into a bankbook. Non-verbal students carry home a communication notebook reporting information about the student's day. The administrators, parent coordinator and parent association board members constantly reach out for additional parent participation, although they recognize that some parents are still not sufficiently involved in school life. They are expanding current efforts to increase parental involvement, especially at the main site, through well-designed workshops on topics of interest.

**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.**

Students in the standardized assessment program receive excellent instruction aligned to the State standards. Balanced literacy using leveled libraries and grade-specific units of study, with well-designed pacing calendars very effectively meet the reading and writing needs of the students. Impact Math effectively addresses needs in the math program. Science, social studies, technology and physical education follow the State mandates. Excellent rubrics, cooperatively developed by the teacher and students, outline the targeted goals for each curricular area. Students in the alternate assessment programs receive appropriate instruction based on outcomes from their assessment data. Students, eager to participate, actively engage in their learning activities using augmentative communication technology, where needed. Rubrics and goals, prominently displayed, target the high level, differentiated instructional practices employed by the classroom teams.

Budget, staffing and scheduling decisions, based on student needs, react to the academic goals for all students. The school hired consultants to support the staff in refining skills in the workshop model. An educator for Social Responsibility provides a conflict resolution program that supports Project Genesis. Leveled library books, computers, Smart Boards and other assistive technology devices enhance the learning environment. Coaches, well versed in working with the alternate assessment population, provide further skilled support. Students are well known across and within sites. The non-verbal students have close relationships with their paraprofessionals. Students and parents stated, "The staff is here to help. We are never turned away." Teachers effectively model respect by focusing on the issue, not the behavior. Attendance is closely monitored by site and class and has improved this year. A pattern of absence triggers a visit by the attendance teacher and family worker. Telephone calls are made and logged daily. Recognition and incentives are provided for improved and excellent attendance. Despite these actions, attendance is not yet high enough

**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.**

An extensive program of high-quality professional development, based on experience, skill, need and interest, supports the school faculty very well. A wide-ranging menu of activities, designed in response to a staff survey, effectively offers many options for the staff. Coaches, consultants, mentors and the administrators provide additional, desired support as the needs arise. District 75 offers many helpful workshops that are well attended by staff. Formal observations by the principal and assistant principals take place on a regular schedule. Focused walk-throughs, using an excellent rubric and feedback form, provide timely constructive suggestions about teaching and learning. Intervisitation practices are well supported and encouraged. Common planning time enables the teachers to collaborate on areas highlighted by the data.

The school is an orderly, effective learning environment. Rules, regulations and behavioral expectations are spelled out in handbooks for staff and parents. New teachers receive two excellent additional handbooks, designed for inexperienced staff, outlining rules, regulations, procedures, curriculum strategies and lesson planning. New staff members, assigned mentor and coach time, regularly meet with their assistant principal and receive additional excellent support. Partnerships with outside organizations support the academic, social and emotional growth of the students. Urban Advantage supports science education. Arts Horizon expands opportunities for arts creativity through the development of murals around curriculum themes. One class of alternate assessment students is going to a nearby pool and learning to swim.

**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 data for each student determines the insightful, rigorous planning process, resulting in the individual education plan, academic and related services support, the Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal's goals and objectives. Data from State examinations and school-based assessment materials provides the information that determines successive stages in the teaching and learning process. The cyclical nature of the planning propels the program and effectively builds upon previous attainment. When necessary, interim adjustments quickly take place.

School-wide and individual plans, rigorously scrutinized by the administration four times per year, determine the need for revisions. The assistant principals meet with teachers and coaches weekly, assessing performance outcomes and planning for individual student achievement.

The principal and school community has a clear vision for the future of the school. Their data shows that their program of interventions results in greater numbers of students moving to least restrictive environment placements. They say the school "is a safe haven for our students. They feel respected, accepted and at home."

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME:</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.

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	
<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.

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		
<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 and tardiness?				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?					<b>X</b>
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?					<b>X</b>
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				<b>X</b>	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				<b>X</b>	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					<b>X</b>

<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?				<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					<b>X</b>

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