



**The  
NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The School of Science and Technology**

**Elementary School 152  
725 East 23<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11210**

**Principal: Dr Rhonda Farkas**

**Dates of review: April 14-15, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Diana Shepherd**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The School of Science and Technology is an elementary school with 803 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 70% Black, 17% Hispanic, 5% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 94%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 74% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school collects a wide range of data, and evaluates it for all groups of students to provide a very clear picture of student achievement.
- The rigorous analysis of performance data ensures that both special education and English language learners make good progress.
- The work of the inquiry team is a strength and supports the teachers' understanding of the needs of the most vulnerable students.
- Academic intervention is thorough and services are rigorously mapped, enabling teachers to identify when interventions are successful.
- Teachers know their students well because of ongoing data analysis, and consistently plan lessons that provide appropriate levels of challenge.
- The curriculum is broad and offers a range of creative activities, which motivate learners through the development of self-esteem and confidence.
- Professional development is very comprehensive and well executed, supporting teachers to address priorities identified as whole-school goals.
- Partnerships with the community are well developed, providing a valuable dimension to the learning opportunities for students and teachers.
- The school is popular with parents and good leadership ensures that all members of the school community own the vision for the future.

### What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the science curriculum is fully developed to bring it in line with the school's identified specialism.
- Further improve strategic planning by ensuring that all goals are specific, measurable and time related.

## 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 School for Science and Technology was reviewed as part of the pilot program. They have made good progress in meeting the areas identified for development. They have addressed the identified issues rigorously, improving opportunities for both students and staff to have access to technology as a tool for their work. Both groups use these well. Sharing good practice and intervisitations are well-established and effective elements of the professional program. Achievement in math has significantly improved and now exceeds achievement in English language arts. As a result, the school has adjusted their priority for improvement and students now show good growth in English language arts. The science curriculum is developing and there is evidence of some good investigative work and this area continues to improve. The work of the inquiry team is focused and they clearly understand the purpose of their work. The team is lead by the data specialist, who provides clear direction in partnership with the coordinator of academic intervention services. The outcomes from this work effectively inform the planning and support for the most vulnerable students. The school manages behavior well. Teachers use all data well, resulting in appropriately differentiated and well-paced instruction across all grades. Students enjoy learning and understand that the school's expectations for them are high, which helps them to meet their goals. Special education students and English language learners make good progress because their teachers know them well and understand their learning needs. The teachers track the progress of all students and regularly meet with the administration to discuss formally the levels of students' progress. This ensures that all teachers are accountable for the learning of their students. The administration has a well-planned professional development program, which, ensures that teachers have the skills and knowledge to meet their students' needs. This supports teachers' learning and gives them opportunities to demonstrate and practice their skills and understanding to benefit their peers. Relationships with parents are good and they appreciate the expectations the school has for their children. The parent association provides excellent support through fundraising and other activities.

The school plans well for future development making good use of data to understand how best it can improve. The failure, however to ensure that all goals set are both objective and measurable weakens the process. The principal is well respected by all and builds a culture of collaboration and respect, which supports all to achieve the schools high expectations.

## **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 data well and has a good understanding of the performance of all students as a result. They study classroom notes as well as test and interim data to ensure that student information is thorough and up-to-date. Teachers are confident in their use of this information to tailor lessons to the needs of students. They specifically identify where individual or group instruction is necessary. The analysis of both special education students and English language learners is thorough. The administration uses the data tools available to access the scale scores for individuals. This enables them to set specific goals for individual students in order to help them succeed. As a result, these relatively small groups of students make good progress, particularly the special education students. The work of the inquiry team has supported this level of evaluation well. The school disaggregates data annually to understand the performance of relevant groups. There are no significant differences in the relative performance of ethnic groups. There is some variation across the grades in the achievement of boys and girls, and the school is looking at learning styles in order to adjust resources and instructional strategies. Teachers and administrators receive regular training in using and understanding the data systems in the school and use them with confidence. The administration makes comparisons with similar schools with and uses these comparisons strategically to set challenging benchmarks and plan the curriculum.

**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.**

School leaders and faculty plan effectively together to set goals for students. These goals have benchmarks aligned with the predictive Acuity tests and are shared with parents and students. The close focus on individuals has enabled the school to look at the progress of higher and lower achieving students, and plan how best to meet their needs. As a result, class size in the upper grades has been lowered to give a better student-teacher ratio and interim assessment indicates that this is proving successful in supporting growth. The identification of students most in need of improvement is thorough. The referral process and subsequent planning are comprehensive. Effective monitoring, linked well to evidence, ensures that students get the help they need in a timely manner. This process has greatly enhanced the levels of collaboration and the principal cites it as being largely responsible for the school's development as a learning community.

The principal and her team share goals rigorously with the school, building accountability across the whole community including parents. A parent orientation session at the beginning of the year clearly sets the expectations, ensuring that all parents understand how to access information and how they can help their children. The parent coordinator reinforces this and provides workshops to support parents' understanding of the

curriculum. Parents feel very involved and informed. They actively support both the parent association and the school leadership team. They feel well guided and supported in this by the principal.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is well developed.**

The school uses the Teachers’ College model for English language arts. They use two math programs in order to ensure that the full curriculum content is covered. In all classes, instruction is well differentiated to meet identified learning needs. It is evident that students are actively engaged in their learning, shopping for real things or writing poems for their pockets. The broad curriculum provides opportunities for students to experience playing an instrument, creative activities and learning Spanish. In addition, clubs offer activities that promote learning, such as chess, African dance and chorus. Students enjoy these and are highly motivated to attend. There are examples of good investigative science work evident across the grades. Science is an element of the school’s specialist status and is identified as an area for further development.

Expectations in the school are high. Teachers are required to provide statistical evidence from Acuity or ECLAS to show the growth made by students and to explain any inconsistencies. The principal scrutinizes conference notebooks and gives feedback. There is a clear expectation around the quality of classroom learning environments. As a result, it is evident where teachers are confident in using data systems and where they may need more support. Good collaboration between the school leadership team and the cabinet ensures that all budgetary decisions are driven by the needs of students. Leaders have used finances wisely to purchase new reading books and to refurbish the computer laboratory. There are high levels of trust and respect across the school, developed through positive collaboration. Absence is just below the expected level and the school has good systems to ensure all students attend, which the parent coordinator rigorously implements. The principal calls the program, “You have to be in to win!”

**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 at the School of Science and Technology is well organized. Training meets the needs of staff, ensuring that instruction is not only well differentiated but also interesting and enjoyable. Partnerships with both Teachers’ College and Brooklyn College provide useful opportunities for teachers to refresh their understanding of pedagogy and subject knowledge. The staff developer and coaches provide constant support in classes for both experienced and new teachers. They suggest intervisitations and, where necessary, model good practice. As a result, the use of differentiation is consistent across all grades. All teachers, including those new to the profession, are confident to be observed and to offer their classes as lab sites. The principal has a good

understanding of the relative strengths and areas for development within the team and plans thoroughly with each teacher to address them.

There is good collaboration between all teams and the interdisciplinary work undertaken by the guidance, support and instructional teams is no exception. The pupil personnel committee coordinates this work and well-defined procedures ensure that it is smooth and effective. The team discusses the programs for each student regularly and reviews progress in consultation with teachers and parents, aligning academic goals with those for personal development. Behavior is good. The behavior policy is well articulated and all students and parents are aware of its implications. As a result, suspensions are rare. Partnerships with academic establishments are very positive. The school works closely with two local colleges and two high schools, offering placement for the senior intern program to the closest, Midwood High School. All partnerships offer an additional dimension to the curriculum experience for students and have a positive impact.

**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 school plans well for both students and staff. They set student goals with interim benchmarks and monitor these using the range of data available. They align instruction to these goals and ensure that students are on track to meet or exceed the grade. Teachers know the expected standards and the school sets goals to ensure that instruction meets this expectation. However, the whole school plan for professional development lacks interim and measurable goals, which would enable more specific tracking of progress towards improvements in identified areas. All staff use the range of data collected very well. In particular, monthly assessments for students at risk provide accurate information about the effectiveness of intervention strategies and the progress students make as a result. Teachers use conference data for reading and writing effectively to inform instruction on a daily and weekly basis, and align their planning to goals for all students as a result.

The administration uses interim assessments to identify the specific areas of weakness in learning across the grades. They use this information to make strategic decisions relating to the curriculum. The effective planning and development of special education and academic intervention is an example of this. Leaders evaluate the effectiveness of all plans using data and use the outcomes of this evaluation to inform the next stages of development. The interim goals for student outcomes, however, frequently lack clarity and are not always measurable. The school is aware of the need to work on this area of planning. The principal is a credible and engaging leader. She strongly believes in the value of professional learning and provides many opportunities for staff to learn and grow. In this way, she has built respect and increased accountability among the staff, creating and sustaining strong teams who work well together and with the wider community.

# Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The School of Science and Technology</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 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	

<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>