



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Caton School

Early Childhood School 249

**18 Marlborough Road
Brooklyn
NY 11226**

Principal: Elisa Brown

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Lead Reviewer: Shehz Ali

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Caton School is an early childhood school with 742 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 3. The school population comprises 57% Black, 39% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 31% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 93.3%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 92% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Through the principal's strong leadership and effective staff team, the school continues its clear progress and growth.
- The school makes and revises decisions based on thorough data analysis from consistently updated data profiles of students.
- Based on data, all students receive flexible intervention and/or enrichment to extend the differentiation evident in classrooms.
- The school successfully schedules distinct, small group and science instruction during the school day.
- A dynamic arts program enhances the broad, integrated curriculum evident throughout the school.
- Professional development is well chosen, based on teacher choice and school need, to ensure staff are consistently updated on effective practices.
- Students are engaged, eager to demonstrate knowledge and respond well to the school's high expectations.
- School goals are well planned, with clear targets and effective periodic monitoring.
- Teachers collaborate effectively in formal grade meetings and informally to share best practices and maintain consistency of common assessments.

What the school needs to improve

- Analyze data to compare the effectiveness of different programs and initiatives and to determine the impact of interventions or enrichment.
- Further disaggregate data to determine additional subgroup trends and patterns throughout the school.
- Continue to monitor and strengthen student behavior, especially during transition times.

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 Caton School is a well-run school where high expectations, sustained progress and relentless monitoring and evaluation are the norm. The principal's strong focus on seeking out the most effective instructional and management practices means that staff have many opportunities to visit each other's classes and other schools, in and outside of New York State. The school's data systems ensure that staff are able to determine the specific trends and needs of individual students and are therefore able to create specific intervention and enrichment plans for students. The school is not as successful in tracking trends in the achievement and progress of different sub-groups of students. Student plans are well aligned with class and grade level plans which all effectively align with school-wide plans. As a result, the school accurately monitors its path to achieving its goals and measurable targets. Constant collection, analysis and evaluation of data ensure the school can predict outcomes and the needs of the school. This means it can very effectively plan ahead for future growth. Planning is supported by innovative programming, for example of small groups and themed days, but the school's evaluation of the impact of its programs is not strong enough. The school's programs give younger students a head start to preparing for future testing and success, as high expectations and rigor are evident in all areas. Teachers are well prepared with well-chosen professional development of high quality that extends their capacity and shared ownership of school-wide initiatives.

The school has made good progress since last year's review. Focused school-wide planning with effective writing intervention programs has resulted in improved writing samples and improvements in assessment results. The school's use of technology is well integrated and provides an increase in engagement and interaction for students. The school's inquiry team is well established and works well with staff to ensure the bottom third of students is effectively monitored and supported.

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 its data collection systems very effectively to maintain and monitor individual student data. The data gives teachers and the administration a wealth of information about individual achievement, progress and need. The principal uses

Prosper and EdPerformance database software regularly to generate reports that provide teachers with detailed information about patterns of achievement, analyzed by standard. They also provide suggestions for next steps that might be taken with specific groups. Pre- and post-tests accurately measure student progress from a baseline. As a result, the school is able to predict outcomes reliably for upcoming state tests.

A wealth of assessment data about special education students and English language learners is collected as effectively and as regularly as for other students. However, their progress is not specifically compared to the progress made by the rest of the school. The school analyzes and compares data based on ethnicity and gender. For example, the school recognizes and celebrates the various cultures throughout the school.

Teachers at the school are well established in data analysis and interpretation and outcomes and processes are regularly discussed at grade and other meetings. Many other schools visit The Caton School to find best practices they can share, while teachers at the school often visit other schools, some outside of New York City, to seek out best practices to adopt here. The principal's data comparisons with other Early Childhood schools across the City and her analysis of patterns of data over time provide evidence of better progress and greater innovative programming and initiatives. All stakeholders celebrate the improvements and innovations the school has made.

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 principal and senior team have set measurable goals for the school and it is on target to meet them by the end of the year. Staff and the administration regularly monitor individual student progress and are fully aware of those students not meeting their targets. Plans and goals for each student are completely individualized and each student receives specific help or enrichment to match their needs. Through the use of various data perspectives, teachers look at students in terms of standards met, skills needed and content mastered. They then create plans to meet specific student need. While teachers have defined goals for their students and students are able to explain general areas of weakness, some students are not able to discuss their specific goals or how and when they will be achieved.

Teachers receive frequent memos and reminders from the administration about adjustments to school-wide plans and goals and receive instructions, hints and suggestions for implementation. Parents' involvement is high at The Caton School and they are sufficiently aware of school events and goals. Staff regularly communicate with parents to ensure skills and content are well supported year on year. Parents celebrate the family feeling throughout the school and therefore want to participate and give back to the school. The school has creatively scheduled and staffed before- and after-school programs to ensure parents can drop off and pick up students more conveniently.

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 outstanding.

The school designs and plans the curriculum to meet student needs and challenge students to achieve more. Curriculum maps are very detailed and provide the specific pacing needed for common grade-wide assessments. Maps provide differentiated work for students, technology connections, suggested questioning and vocabulary usage, and formative assessment strategies. In response to the recognized weakness in student writing, the school has also adopted a specific writing assessment to identify skill-based needs in student writing.

The school's broad curriculum has foundations in arts and technology. Students take part in various cultural dance workshops, a keyboarding class, art fairs, photography workshops and visual art classes that are all well integrated into core content areas. As a result, students express themselves passionately about their experiences and knowledge outside of core content areas and appreciate and celebrate the cultural differences in their neighborhood. Technology also creates added engagement and excitement as students regularly interact with Smartboards and use computers to enhance and extend classroom lessons.

Based on detailed, revised data, the school differentiates instruction extremely well for every student. Aside from small, flexible groupings in classes and in after-school and extended day programs, the school has innovatively scheduled formal, small group instruction time during the school day. These times meet the needs of students very well and focus the school's work in one area. For example, during the review, each student in the relevant grade received specific intervention for the upcoming State math test. Another example of innovative scheduling is "Super Science Friday" where, for the day, teachers offer science-focused activities and lessons that are well integrated with English language arts and math.

Teachers are effectively held accountable by senior staff. Teachers appreciate the high expectations the school has of staff and understand that those teachers who remain from year to year are of the quality necessary to continually push students forward. As a result, teachers trust each other in their work and collaborate regularly. Through constant formal and informal meetings, teachers also hold each other accountable for their work and results. This high level of trust serves as a good model for students and they are well aware of the school's behavior expectations and consequences.

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 outstanding.

Starting with the principal, all staff attend well-chosen professional development training to continually and consistently hone their craft. The principal was chosen as a Cahn Fellow and is continually challenged by her peers to rethink decisions and procedures and develop new and better ways of ensuring that the school's effectiveness is continually improving. Assistant principals and teachers all self-assess regularly and are accountable to each other for continued growth and progress. Teachers are encouraged and trusted to try innovative ideas in classrooms and in their grade level. As a result, teachers feel a deep sense of ownership for their work and work hard to ensure success.

Beginning with a teacher's self-identified needs, the administration offers varied professional development opportunities while keeping school-wide needs in mind. Numerous out-of-State conferences and training sessions are commonplace with staff, as the principal's focus is on finding the best training available. The school has begun to develop a video bank of best practice for teacher training, where in-house teachers demonstrate high-quality lessons based on specific strategies or content areas. As a result, teachers receive relevant information for their specific population of students in their specific environment. New teachers have mentors and meet with administration weekly to monitor practice and assess their need for the necessary training. As a result, teachers express confidence and security in their ability to meet and surpass the high standards and continued improvement expected by the administration.

The school runs very smoothly and, through creative scheduling and partnerships with community-based organizations, ensures students are monitored well and engaged before and after school. Strong leadership ensures all stakeholders have clear roles and routines so students know and understand what is to be expected and what to expect.

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's success draws extensively on the principal's vision for high-quality education and outcomes, which is very well understood by staff and other stakeholders. The school's Comprehensive Education Plan is a working, living document where revisions are regularly sent to teachers and staff when on-going changes and improvements take place. These revisions help to guide the school on its path to continued, sustained improvement.

Through the constant monitoring and evaluation of their programming, the school consistently revises and refocuses plans when data shows a need. Periodic assessments ensure students, classes and grade levels are on pace to meet school targets. Members of the administration discuss plans regularly with teachers to ensure each student's progress is sufficient to meet stated individual and school-wide goals. Teacher goals are also revisited consistently with detailed pre-year, mid-year and end-of-year conferences where past and expected goals and progress are evaluated and measured.

Teachers use the available data about their students very well to modify their instructional plans to ensure students meet their goals.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Caton School	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

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

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

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

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?					X
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?					X
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?					X
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?					X
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?					X
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?					X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3					X

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?					X
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?					X
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?					X
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?					X
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?					X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?					X
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to 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
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					X

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped