



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Gerritsen Beach School**

**Elementary School 277**

**2529 Gerritsen Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11229**

**Principal: Jeanne M. Fish**

**Dates of review: October 3 – 5, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Alan Boyle**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Gerritsen Beach School is an elementary school with 428 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 6% Black, 7% Hispanic, 82% White and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 2.4% English language learners and 10.6% 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 93.2%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Teachers have a finely tuned and constantly updated view of each student's progress because the school has excellent procedures for gathering data.
- Boys' achievement has significantly improved because the school implemented effective strategies as a result of data analysis.
- The school improves continuously because the whole school community contributes to rigorous goal setting.
- All students make excellent progress because class teachers identify specific, measurable, learning goals for each individual student.
- Specialist teachers, and other support services, provide excellent support to students in greatest need of improvement.
- Teachers share the highest possible expectations with students and their parents.
- Teachers fully engage students with their learning because the school designs an exciting and enriched curriculum.
- Teachers set demanding standards for themselves and provide excellent instruction to students.
- The principal and assistant principal make careful observations and provide constructive feedback to support high quality instruction.
- The school makes excellent use of teacher assessments and other diagnostic tools to monitor the effectiveness of plans and interventions.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to work with groups of students whose progress has been identified as an area for particular focus.
- Continue to provide support to teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and track student progress.
- Further develop the diagnostic assessment framework for the math curriculum.

## 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 Gerritsen Beach School is unique and has many high quality features. Teachers generate very high quality data from comprehensive assessments of student achievement. This pinpoints what students know and can do with remarkable accuracy. The data flows efficiently through clear procedures to everyone who needs it. An example of this efficient process can be seen in the way in which the school was able to quickly identify that some students are slipping from Level 4 to 3 in City tests. High quality professional relationships exist throughout the school. The principal's humility and professional determination make her stand out as a great leader. Faculty and administration set challenging goals for continuous improvement. Class teachers provide excellent instruction while specialist and support services follow up with very effective interventions. Everyone shares the high expectations, including students and parents. One example of this is the school's efforts to close the gap between special education students and the general education population.

The curriculum is creative and results in high student engagement. It enriches learning, stimulates high academic achievement and feeds students' personal growth. One area for growth in the core curriculum is its diagnostic assessment framework for math. It provides a less detailed analysis than for English language arts. Excellent data systems feed reliable information into the monitoring and review process. Challenging goals are set with milestones to check progress. The school opens students' eyes to the world around them. It develops confident citizens who care for their environment. It is no wonder that students say they wish they could stay at the school for their entire education. The school successfully addressed issues highlighted in the last Quality Review. For example, teachers now closely monitor the progress of all ethnic groups, the achievement gap between boys and girls is closed and goal setting has become very rigorous. Additionally, the school has excellent procedures to evaluate the quality of students' learning. The inquiry team is up and running and has completed one task. The team has chosen to work with 15 students to move from low Level 3 to Level 4.

#### **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.**

Teachers are meticulous in their attention to detail when they assess their students. They collect a wide range of important data about student achievement and progress. Teachers are required to file reports with the administration several times each year. These provide in depth analysis of what each student knows and can do. Teachers' deep understanding

of the data informs instruction. Consequently, students consistently achieve high standards.

Analysis of 2006 test data shows that boys' achievement in English language arts is lower than girls'. Last year the school introduced a wide range of strategies, such as more non-fiction texts, study buddies and many more. The 2007 test scores show that the same proportion of boys and girls in grade 4 reached Level 3 or higher. The gap between boys and girls who were in grade 5 is almost closed. In the grade 3 test more boys than girls reached Level 3 or above this year. This is an example of the real impact the school makes through planned interventions informed by data analysis. The school's recent analysis of teacher assessments and test scores shows that fewer special education students achieve Levels 3 and 4 than general education students. Plans are underway to close that gap.

**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.**

Teachers are closely involved in the identification of priorities in the school. The principal invites teachers to contribute individually, supporting their suggestions with data. The administration considers all views. The principal brings forward key priorities for deeper discussion throughout the school. This valuable teamwork generates demanding overall goals. As plans develop, they include interim goals for review at critical points in the school's data collection. The school recently introduced a very rigorous planning process. Class teachers have a one to one conference with the principal or assistant principal. They formally evaluate the progress of each individual student. The overall goal across grades 3 through 5 is to increase each student's test score by 20 points. This is a very challenging goal and demonstrates an example of how the school has high expectations for its students. The power of this planning process is in the professional dialogue. It leads to a personalized action plan for every student. Plans emerge as key learning objectives for each student and the teacher and administrator review progress at the following meeting. This excellent process allows the school to apply specific interventions for any group of students discretely, without shining a spotlight on them.

Specialized teachers and other support services provide excellent support to those students in greatest need of improvement. The school carefully diagnoses students' needs and then plans suitable interventions with clear goals and timescales for improvement. The pupil personnel team works exceptionally well with all members contributing key, relevant, data to the table for discussion. The group then uses the data to inform decisions about next steps. The team carefully notes action points for review at the next meeting.

**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.**

This is a very focused and determined school. Once a strategy is agreed to, action starts immediately and follows through to completion. As a result, success rates are high. The

school is bursting with examples of how students' academic progress is linked to their personal growth.

The breadth and depth of the curriculum is very impressive. The school makes learning come alive with an incredible range of exciting and engaging activities. For example, the school uses its backyard gardening program to integrate a newly formed, self-contained class with mainstream students. Teachers pair grade 5 garden buddies with younger special education students. They share tasks such as growing basil, preparing their own pesto sauce and making a meal with pasta. The marine biology program is the cornerstone of the curriculum. It is a unique and excellent educational resource. It creates a learning link between the classroom and the students' own environment. A visual arts and dance program also enriches the curriculum.

Teachers plan their lessons with great care. They use their detailed assessments to arrange differentiated learning activities matched to students' needs. Teachers designed their own detailed curriculum map for English language arts. They set themselves demanding goals for ECLAS and periodic assessments. Teachers agree that the math program does not give them a sufficiently detailed analysis of skills and as a result they are working on their own diagnostic assessment framework for math.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

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

The principal and assistant principal visit classrooms every day. Their observations provide valuable data about learning and they use the data sensitively to improve instruction. Teachers welcome opportunities for learning walks and are provided time to visit classrooms in other grades to share expertise. New teachers have structured support that works well when teachers take advantage of that opportunity.

Professional learning is at the heart of this school. For example, teachers introduced a balanced math workshop over the last two years. During the process, the principal visited classrooms across the same grade. After she shared her observations and reflections the teachers discussed her comments, re-conceptualized the workshop and tried again. This led to another round of observations, discussion and further refinement. All the support services in the school work closely with teachers to increase student achievement and as a result they are very effective. Strong partnerships with outside organizations provide enrichment opportunities for students to grow into responsible citizens.

**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 strong planning process outlined earlier provides the framework to monitor and review both student outcomes and teacher outcomes. Teachers use their own assessments in the process and they set their own interim goals in terms of what students are actually learning.

The use of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures is also well developed. The school uses this data to evaluate intervention plans for individuals and groups. It also uses this data to evaluate school improvement plans and strategic decisions. The school intends to further improve the process when it gains access to the new Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS). In readiness for ARIS, the school intends to make all its teachers data experts, even though their use of data is already well developed.

Reliable data about student achievement flows continuously through the school. This data circulates smoothly through excellent procedures. Faculty and administration work in harmony with exceptional professional dedication, using the data to evaluate progress in terms of interim goals and outcomes. Through outstanding professional collaboration, they share a clear vision for the future and set very challenging goals towards achievement.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Gerritsen Beach School (ES 277)</b>	△	▶	✓	+	◇
<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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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	

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

<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>					<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?					X
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?					X
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?					X
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?					X
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					<b>X</b>