



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Frances E Carter**

**Elementary School - Middle School 384**

**242 Cooper Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11207**

**Principal: Brumhilda Perez-Ortiz**

**Dates of review: May 28 - 29, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Andrea Harris**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Frances E Carter is an elementary school - middle school with 651 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 7. The school population comprises 25% Black, 72% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 10% 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 91.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 98% eligibility.

The Frances E Carter School will reach full capacity with the first 8<sup>th</sup> grade class in 2009. There is a strong collaboration with a District 75 Citywide program housed in the same building.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is very committed and provides strong leadership that continues to move the school forward.
- The school has very high expectations for all students to support their achievement.
- Students are well behaved and proud of their school's broad and engaging before- and after-school curriculum.
- The school rigorously collects a wide range of data used to support the monitoring of student progress.
- There are successfully designed intervention programs focused on meeting the needs of students requiring additional opportunities for learning.
- The highly effective organization of the school produces a learning environment that is inviting, print rich and effectively engages students.
- The school provides extensive, structured professional development for teachers within a grade to meet, plan and assess student progress.
- The school is a caring community consistently providing parents with information regarding the performance and progress of their children.
- The school has suitable partnerships with outside entities that support the personal and academic growth of students.
- Teachers work in a highly collaborative manner focused on improving student achievement.

### What the school needs to improve

- Involve students in setting and monitoring measureable goals in all their academic subjects.
- Further develop teachers' ability to analyze summative and formative data to differentiate classroom instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- Develop additional strategies to enable new teachers and teachers new to a grade to take advantage of all offered support.
- Expand the school-wide goal setting process to include interim targets that are monitored and revised as needed to achieve final goals.

## 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 principal is a highly inspirational leader who creates an environment where teachers, parents and outside organizations come together as a team dedicated to moving each individual student forward. She effectively communicates to the school community high expectations for all students. There are programs that most students find very engaging and support academic improvement while strategically supporting these expectations. Students use programs, such as Acuity and Scantron, during the school day, the zero-hour instructional block and after-school programs, as a platform to provide differentiation of instruction. The school gathers and generates a wide range of data, meticulously used by school leaders and teachers to track and monitor student progress. School leaders have developed a “comprehensive student assessment form” to simplify the process of tracking student progress. This streamlined spreadsheet contains results on school-based assessments and includes goals in the areas of reading and writing with recommendations for next learning steps. This structure has promoted the work in this area by most teachers, but many still struggle and require additional support.

Teachers’ work is highly collaborative and provides new teachers with a strong feeling of support. However at times, newer staff members and teachers new to a grade find it difficult take advantage of all the help. Teachers meet daily or at scheduled meetings to engage in rigorous conversations around instruction and student learning. At the heart of every teacher conversation is a continual focus on student work to inform instruction. This has enabled the school to achieve excellent results with improving outcomes for all students inclusive of its most challenging learners. The establishment of a school-wide enrichment program has taken root this year. This has helped to address the needs of the higher achieving students along with a state-of-the-art 60 student, high tech, computer lab.

Since the previous Quality Review, the school has made good progress, effectively implementing structures and addressing school-wide goals. All professional development sessions directly link to school-wide goals clarifying their purpose and plans for achievement. The practice of establishing and revisiting school-wide goals has become ongoing work at the school. Coaches consistently participate in grade-level planning meetings, targeting differentiation of lessons. Although the goal is to differentiate based on the individual needs of students not all teachers instruct at this level yet. The inquiry team’s action research project has helped to support the professional growth of staff with differentiation and goal setting. The team identified 24 grade 4 students performing in the bottom third in English language arts. A focus was improving vocabulary and identifying main idea to increase students’ reading comprehension. Teachers have adopted various instructional strategies based on the work of the inquiry team.

## **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 approaches student accountability as one of its top priorities. The principal and the instructional cabinet effectively gather and generate a wide variety of data. The school manages data well using its own comprehensive student assessment form. It supports teachers' understanding of the performance and progress of each student, class and grade. Easy access enables teachers to analyze what students know and determine the next learning steps. It provides on-grade and across-grade standardized at-a-glance academic profile of each student. The profile follows the student from year-to-year providing future teachers with a comprehensive look at student performance over time. Staff efficiently analyze data, comparing past State and City performance and targeting detailed information about individual students and appropriate subgroups. Data is broken down into subject area content skills. Item analyses effectively support daily planning and designing and implementing intervention programs for grades, classes, subgroups and individual students. Data, inquiry and academic intervention teams strengthen the schools ability to examine student performance and note student strengths while targeting specific areas of need. However, some teachers still struggle with taking ownership for generating their formative data and using it to plan for differentiated instruction aimed at improving student outcomes. The principal with the support of the data specialist provides teachers with a detailed comprehensive report comparing school performance with other District and peer group schools. As a baseline, the school uses this information for setting school-wide goals and targeting selected subgroups.

**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 review of formal and school generated data is a highly effective process and done consistently at grade conferences, common planning, intervention and inquiry team meetings. Teachers use data forms that show an alignment between school-wide goals for individual students, classes, grades, and the goals set for each of their students. There is good collaboration among teachers and coaches in developing the work of setting high goals for individual students and planning lessons that will support achievement. Presently, however, students do not participate in the goal setting process and goals are often not measurable. The school links student ownership of goal setting and progress as key to accelerating learning next year. The work done by the inquiry and intervention teams supporting students in greatest need of improvement is highly effective. Identified students spend a minimum one period daily in the new computer lab working on selected activities targeting their individual needs. The school is effectively focusing on the performance of its higher achieving students. The Acuity resource tool supports teacher planning for accelerating learning for these of students. Teachers very

carefully examine content skills and item analysis reports to support the selection of appropriate extension and enrichment activities. One grade 5 class used laptops independently to work on grade 7 literacy activities while others worked with the teacher. The principal and staff are highly collaborative and share whole school goals with the entire school community. Parents receive detailed information about their child's performance and progress four times during the school year. Parents greatly appreciate the school's open-door policy and use it regularly to share information about the learning needs and capacity of their children. They view the school as a safe and nurturing environment that provides their children with varied and rich learning opportunities.

**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 is very evaluative making good use of collaborative curriculum planning sessions. They align pacing calendars and units of study to school, class and grade-level data when reviewing the structure and content of its core curriculum. All staff members hold themselves highly accountable for the success of their learners. There is blocked programming for literacy, math, science and social studies. In addition, the zero-hour program that addresses the academic needs of students has a positive impact on student performance and enhances the beginning of each school day. To support the needs of students in grades 4 through 7, instruction takes place using a departmentalized approach. Analyzing interim assessments informs decisions regarding appropriate programs for promoting students' progress. The workshop model provides students with highly engaging and motivating instruction. A grade 5 class designed tee shirts to support their learning about the presidents of the United States. Instruction is most frequently provided in group settings. However, teachers are not fully differentiating instruction based on the data, and teaching does not always closely match student needs. Opportunities for students to take increased responsibility for their learning are consistent throughout the school. Gender based initiatives are one of the several methods the school uses to provide students a broad and engaging curriculum. Students feel their school has everything. One student noted, "Teachers work many hours and help us by supporting our interests." The curriculum offers a wide range of clubs from basketball, science, art and music to dance and an all boys' literature circle. Rigorous monitoring of student attendance continually ups the ante and both parents and students appreciate the rewards. This focus has improved student attendance and has had a positive impact on their performance.

**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 has a very comprehensive professional development program that ensures teachers improve their practice. The school conducts a qualitative needs assessment annually giving teachers the opportunity to indicate pedagogical strengths as well as areas they wish to improve. Effective professional development in the utilization of a range of data-based programs enables teachers to acquire proficiency to plan suitable

activities and monitor student progress. There are regular walk throughs led by administrators and teachers. This results in teachers maintaining an open approach to advice and support. Built into the school day is a structure that allows teachers to observe each other's practice supporting a climate of teacher's reflection regarding the quality of their work. Despite all of the school's efforts, new teachers and those new to a grade feel a bit overwhelmed.

The principal is highly visible and frequently visits classrooms conducting formal and informal observations. She has an excellent understanding of her staff and supports their professional growth well. The school collaborates effectively with several outside organizations that support its goals for students. The highly effective organization of the building supports the school running smoothly and student engagement in learning remains elevated before during and after school.

**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 leadership takes into account a wide range of data, inclusive of the inquiry team's action research project, before making decisions regarding the setting of school-wide goals and the best use of instructional strategies. The use of data from conferring notes, students' discussions, student intervention work and collaborative teamwork all support the regular revisions made to individualized student goals. This practice also supports student progress, targeting specific aspects of their learning while setting interim goals. Teachers have taken a very personal interest in the assessment of their students using online resources to develop more appropriate assessment tools. This has resulted in parents having constant knowledge regarding the progress made by their children towards goals.

The school implements a variety of quality assurance activities. However, they are not organized and the use of a planned and systematic approach to review school-wide goals and set measurable interim goals is lacking. The developing of a school-wide structure is taking root. School leaders and staff take a proactive approach to implementing a comprehensive structure that reviews interim outcomes and drives the next stage of goal setting linked to improvement planning and achieving final goals.

The principal has clearly developed a highly effective learning environment in which staff, students and parents are all learners. Staff share a clear vision that targets constant improvement in their teaching practices. Members of the administration and faculty are reflective practitioners who truly believe "it is all about the students". Individual teachers and grade-level teams consistently monitor and revise instructional plans based on data and student progress.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Frances E. Carter School</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 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	

### Overall score for Quality Statement 3

### and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	△	▷	✓	+	◇
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	

**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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					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	
<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>