



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Conselyea Preparatory School

Middle School 577

**320 Manhattan Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11211**

Principal: Maria Masullo

Dates of review: March 27 - 28, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Helen Donnellan

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well
What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review
Overall evaluation
How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Conselyea Preparatory School is a middle school with 382 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 12% Black, 61% Hispanic, 23% White and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 94.0%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility.

The school is located in temporary buildings attached to an elementary school and also has some use of shared facilities with the host school. It will be relocated at a larger site in September 2008.

The members of the cabinet and inquiry team are the principal, interim acting assistant principal and the three grade advisers.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has high expectations for all students and students know they are expected to work hard to achieve high outcomes.
- The school supplements City and State data with analyses in math and English language arts to give a detailed picture of student progress.
- Data is well used to make teachers aware of students in need of additional challenge or at risk of underachieving.
- Staff make good use of data to evaluate the outcomes of instruction and use this to modify programs when necessary.
- Students and staff show a high level of mutual respect for each other.
- Staff are highly supportive of each other and form a close-knit and supportive professional community.
- The school has established a wider range of ways to keep parents informed about student progress and involve them in their learning.
- The school works hard to keep attendance at a high level and reduce lateness.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a school-wide planning structure which sets measurable and time-related goals with interim benchmarks to support systematic monitoring and evaluation.
- Align professional development with school priorities and evaluate the impact of professional development on instruction.
- Establish a consistent system for rewards and sanctions as part of a strategy to reduce the number of disruptive incidents.
- Extend programs to promote the personal growth of students as well as helping them to change their behavior.
- Use collaborative meetings to create instructional plans with specific goals and time-related benchmarks showing what each student needs to achieve.
- Make the maximize use of all opportunities available to enhance the core and creative curriculum.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

School leaders and staff are aware that the school is the preferred choice of families and students because of its strong academic history. They are eager to maintain this reputation and work hard to support students in their academic development. Students treat the staff with respect and feel that they are just as respected by the staff.

The school prides itself on enabling its students to achieve well and is using data well to track progress and performance and pinpoint where instruction needs to be varied to overcome areas with lower achievement. Students and parents are well informed about student progress and staff work hard to give them information throughout the year. The curriculum is limited, but the school makes the most of space to deliver instruction. Test scores are used to group students for English language arts and the highest-achieving students are taught together in all subjects. Differentiation within classes is variable. Faculty is supported in addressing areas for improvement through working with colleagues and external training. However, decisions about professional development are not linked to the whole-school priorities, but determined by the needs of individual staff. The school systems for rewards and sanctions are multi-layered with no clear link between them.

Planning is strongest at student level where systematic reviews of data lead to prompt changes to instruction. Whole-school goals are not precise and long-term planning is limited. The school priorities are shared with staff, but not broken down to show the actions different teams and teachers need to take to achieve those priorities. The focus of the inquiry team is to track 30 students with earlier performance higher than their current scores of Level 2. The team is monitoring their progress for two years with the hope that this will show the impact of interventions to support the students in reaching Level 3. The work is continuing but has not yet yielded results.

Since the last Quality Review students have more opportunities to apply subject knowledge and skills across subjects as some project work has been introduced into social studies and more technology is available. The new programs introduced for the lower-achieving students in math and English language arts are intended to boost their learning, but the outcome of these programs is not yet known. The school makes good use of automated messaging to inform parents about events at school and student issues and seeks to involve more parents as active members of the school community. Improving parent involvement remains an issue as many parents have little involvement with the school. Teachers are more informed about systems for data analysis and receive support to help them become more confident to challenge data for themselves.

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 an extensive range of data, including formal test scores and teachers' informal records of student progress to give a continually updated picture of student progress and performance. The recently introduced item skills analyses in math and English language arts provide in-depth information on the skills and subject strands where students do well and areas where further instruction is needed. Teachers use their records of meetings with students to identify sub-skills and particular knowledge the individual students need to master in order to make further progress.

Staff compared their detailed skill analyses to the data generated by the Acuity system, which found close alignment between the two sets of results. This showed the accuracy of the school's analyses and gave staff additional trust in the computer-generated data. The school-wide tracking system for math and English language arts is shared with teachers and clearly displayed in the principal's room. These displays are color-coded to identify students close to moving up a level and those at risk of slipping a level. Staff can easily identify different rates of progress and use their informal records to investigate possible reasons for this.

Staff use Acuity analyses creatively to gather information about the progress of all English language learners by grouping them as a 'virtual' class in the data set. Graphic analyses of different ethnic and gender groups is used alongside spreadsheets showing the performance of individual students, which makes it complicated for administrators to identify patterns and trends in the learning of these groups. The math coach continues to support staff in the use of Acuity and other assessment tools following earlier training for all staff. There is still a heavy reliance on analyses provided by administration as some staff lack sufficient confidence in this.

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 encourages collaborative working and the limited space at the present site means that staff have to work effectively together and sometimes share teaching areas. Subject teams meet each week and grade teams meet three times a year to discuss and agree how to teach the required curriculum areas, matching this to information from the most recent data. These meetings determine actions rather than plans linked to whole-school goals. Plans lack specific goals and time-related benchmarks to enable progress towards the goals to be easily monitored.

Parents and staff have high expectations for student learning and students are clear that they are expected to work hard and make good progress. Teachers discuss the results of informal and formal assessments with their students so that they are well informed

about their strengths and areas to improve. They also make good use of available data to identify students in need of additional intervention and pinpoint the areas for this.

The parents who contributed to the review are active in the life of the school and work hard with the staff to find ways of encouraging a greater number of parents to become involved in school life. The school has made significant efforts to give parents more information about events at school and their children's progress. An automated messaging system is well used to give them information using the internet or telephone, which has proved to be more reliable and prompt than giving students written notes.

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 proficient.

In spite of the limited number of classrooms at the current site, the school manages to meet the mandatory requirements for the curriculum. English language arts, math, science and social studies are established and school leaders use ingenuity to provide opportunities for other subjects. Some physical education is provided in the adjoining elementary school's gymnasium for grade 6 classes, but other grades walk to a community gymnasium nearby. The school gives emphasis to the visual arts through scheduled classes and art residencies that are integrated within the school day. There are also opportunities for students to be involved in aspects of the performing arts through external partnerships.

Some teachers deliver stimulating and highly effective instruction and do not let the limited class space restrict the learning or differentiated content they offer students. During a collaborative team-teaching class, teachers used their knowledge of students to pair them together as literary critics evaluating each other's writing for different features. Groups worked at either sentence or text level and applied their knowledge of language structures and vocabulary to make considered judgments in a mature and sensitive way. The level of differentiation varies as some teachers used a whole-class approach rather than addressing the needs of all the students in their class.

Students and staff showed a high level of mutual respect for each other as individuals. A group of students agreed with another student's description of the school staff saying, "(Staff) treat us like a second family." Workshops on dealing with bullying have recently given students strategies to help deal with this issue. Issues arise outside the school with students from other schools, but bullying within the school appears not to be an issue. While staff value the views of students, there is no student government or forum where students can develop skills of active citizenship and use their views to influence school life. The school achieves high attendance levels by notifying parents of student absence promptly and giving pizza parties to students and classes with good attendance.

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 proficient.

Staff show a high level of commitment to improving their professional skills and helping students gain good test scores. They support each other in developing their expertise and when invited to do this informally, give colleagues feedback on their instruction, which adds to feedback from observations. Teachers receive professional development in a number of ways, but it is not always clear how this aligns with school priorities. Staff turn-key learning from off-site development opportunities with colleagues, but do not indicate how professional development improves their instruction.

The reward system is based on the consequences of behavior. In the whole-school system students accumulate tickets and exchange these for goods and meals. Each teacher also uses their own tokens or points for positive behavior and successful learning, which lead to similar rewards. Students with no recorded infractions are also rewarded. Each student's infraction card lists their unacceptable behavior and detentions are given when cards are lost or a certain number of events recorded. The system is complex and disruptive incidents continue to occur. While the number of detentions has fallen this year, suspensions have increased indicating that systems are not successful in motivating all students.

The current emphasis is on controlling behavior rather than giving students strategies for improvement. Guidance and advisory staff spend so much time monitoring and dealing with poor behavior that opportunities to promote students' personal growth and development are limited.

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 proficient.

School leaders have clear goals for the school to move to an appropriate site for a middle school curriculum and reduce class sizes. The school's systems for monitoring and revising its work are based on formal and informal testing schedules so that changes in intervention reflect up-to-date information. Teachers make extensive use of assessment results to evaluate the outcomes of instruction and modify programs when necessary. The systems for tracking progress in math and English language arts are sufficiently robust and detailed to allow systematic monitoring giving the administrative team a clear picture of progress in these subjects.

The school created English language arts classes according to students' test scores in response to data showing that decreasing numbers of students achieve Level 4 as they move into grades 7 and 8. Results for 2008 will be used to evaluate this initiative, illustrating how data is used for monitoring and evaluating changes and progress.

The whole-school priorities are stated in the principal's performance review but the goals are imprecise and lack interim benchmarks, so it is hard to track progress toward achieving the priorities. Teachers do not have specific plans that show the progress they are expected to make with their students or in their professional practice. This makes monitoring their performance more difficult and means they may not be clear about the impact of their work on whole-school goals.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Conselyea Preparatory 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