



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public School 004

Elementary-High School 004

**196-25 Peck Avenue
Queens
NY 11365**

Principal: Marcy Berger

Dates of review: November 7 – 9, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Alvin Jeffs

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 004 is an elementary-high school with 417 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 61% Black, 21% Hispanic, 14% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 2.9% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 83% of the students enrolled and girls account for 17%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 80.9%.

This District 75 school spread across seven sites. Each site has an assistant principal responsible for it and they link closely to the principal at Public School 004. Students experience learning difficulties, emotional disturbance and aspects of autism. Three-quarters of students undertake standardized assessment and the rest have alternate assessments. Some students receive support in the form of sensory integration and adaptive communication. Autistic students are supported by programs of behaviour management and the picture exchange system.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and assistant principals have very high expectations for themselves, their staff and students.
- Teachers and paraprofessionals continuously seek high levels of academic achievement and behavior in classrooms.
- Students enjoy coming to school, feel safe and appreciate the respect shown them by all adults in the school.
- The school makes very good use of data to monitor student progress and identify those in need of additional assistance.
- The budget is used very imaginatively to support a wide range of staffing and resource initiatives.
- Clear procedures, consistent communication and very good behavior management strategies result in good classroom behavior and a calm atmosphere around the school.
- Impressive collaboration between guidance, therapy, teaching and support staff contribute significantly to very good student progress.
- Excellent teamwork at pre-kindergarten and kindergarten levels ensure that the youngest students are assessed well at the earliest possible stage.
- All staff are readily accessible and this is valued highly by parents.
- A strong program of projects, educational trips and visitors further enriches a broad and engaging curriculum.

What the school needs to improve

- Review and continue to share and apply good practice in classroom differentiation.
- Make certain that all academic target-setting is communicated to all standard assessment students.
- Ensure that all school developments have clear deadlines and interim review dates.
- Continue to seek ways in which to raise attendance.

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.

Public School 004 is a school that has earned a deservedly high reputation. It supports students of all school ages who experience complex emotional difficulties. It also works with those who experience the full range of autistic spectrum disorders. This means that staff have to demonstrate a sophisticated combination of compassion, insight and rigor. It is very much to the school's credit that it recruits and retains staff with these important qualities. The vision of the school is that it offers the same general education that other students receive, but with, "a special something extra".

Spread over seven sites, the school has overcome the likelihood of fragmentation by excellent teamwork at all levels and the recognition that all staff, all students and all parents belong to one school. Communication is good and all staff receive very good professional development. It also means that high quality behavior management strategies and clear day-to-day procedures on all sites contribute to what one parent described as the "miraculous" improvement in student behavior.

All aspirations and goals are framed in the light of the achievement data and expectations that would exist in any general education school. All students are seen as having an entitlement to a broad curriculum and total respect. This is a powerful vision and one that accounts for the academic progress that compares well with mainstream schools.

Progress since the last review has been good. Very good developments have been made in the use of data to identify the progress of subgroups and individual students. This is work that is now becoming a day-to-day tool for classroom teachers as well as school leaders. Observations, inter-visitations and one-on-one conferences between teachers and senior staff support teacher accountability. As all students come to school on buses, contact with parents, especially at high school level, is still difficult. The appointment of a new parent coordinator has had a significant impact here, but attendance is still not as good as it should be.

A highly experienced and skilled inquiry team is developing good, technology-based, systems to support fifth grade students who were identified as making insufficient progress by the end of grade 4. The initiative is seen as a way to develop strategies and procedures that will contribute to the further progress of all students.

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 collects and analyzes all of the data available from external systems available. It uses the sophisticated Scantron student data collection system and its own analytical skills. This data is used promptly, distributed across the school and is a powerful vehicle for adapting programs.

Within the crucial area of behavior, the school's own behavior management system, with its strong emphasis on points scored and targets reached, provides very detailed and accurate data relating to individual conduct within class and about the school. Parents and students value this system, as they see it assisting in the, sometimes rapid, improvement of behavior. It is to the school's credit that it has a data collection system that works as well for personal behavior as other systems work for academic success.

Large quantities of current data contribute to the school's very good knowledge of all students. It sees its strength as its emphasis on "holistic" assessment. Its data collection and assessment systems make a major contribution to the excellent progress made by students in both social and academic terms.

The astute use of this powerful database also allows the school to analyze the progress of important subgroups within the school. Based on the previous Quality Review, it has looked at progress in terms of ethnic subgroups. It has not found this very helpful. However, its work on analyzing gender differences has been good. With girls forming a significant subgroup (17%), the school has focused on their achievement. It has looked at the composition of classes and developed a girls' club to overcome any isolation that girls might experience. Significantly, it has looked at the way that boys learn. Based on this analysis it has scheduled physical activity at the start of the school day and reinforced its policy of "nipping personal anxieties in the bud" has led to more settled students and better progress.

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.

Collaboration is central to everything that the school undertakes. Therapists work closely with classroom staff. Teachers and paraprofessionals work as coordinated teams within lessons and the staff as a whole use the good communication systems to ensure that all adults know every student very well. This, in turn, contributes to consistency of response both to students and parents.

From principal to substitute teacher there is a clear understanding of where a student is, personally and academically. The progress, or lack of it, in both areas prompts speedy, and usually effective, action. By having a good grasp of formal and informal data on each student and group, the school is able to identify areas of concern and adapt programs. The inquiry team is a very good example of this. This "proactive" approach to groups is replicated in response to individual students. Case studies and one-on-one discussions

focus on the overall pattern of behavior and learning and seek modifications that will overcome a slowing of progress in either. Care for individual students is outstanding.

Conferencing between teachers, students and parents is good. Most students know what they need to do next in subject areas and with regard to good or acceptable behavior. Parents also say that these goals are shared with them on a regular basis. This sharing also contributes to the “ownership” of progress that the school seeks to give to students and their families. Usually this conferencing is sharp and purposeful. Yet, not all staff make individual academic targets as clear as possible to students.

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 trust and cooperation between staff, students and parents is an outstanding feature of this school. Parents feel recognized as, “one of the family”, and students experience staff who, “really want to talk about me”, and that staff work with a, “close network of friends”.

In line with its belief in a good general education for all, the school has developed a broad and stimulating curriculum. The behavior program permeates all aspects of the school. In addition, regular formal and informal assessments contribute to teachers’ running records. These two aspects mean that achievement within all subjects provides detailed data on each student. A highly successful music and arts partnership enriches the curriculum considerably. Further enrichment arises from the regular trips to places of interest, visits to theaters and the work of visiting artists and performers. Development of the picture exchange system for students with autism has been very effective.

Accountability of staff is good, with daily classroom visits by the principal and assistant principal. In addition, all staff meet on a regular basis with senior staff to discuss students and classroom issues. This, in turn, has meant that the use of data and the setting of individual student goals has become the norm. However, some differentiation of work and tasks within some classrooms are better than others. Some follow-up tasks are insufficiently adapted to different groups within the class. Not all teachers consistently take enough account of the variety and range of learning styles.

The budget has been very well used to develop a technology room, laptop carts and a new library. A new parent coordinator and a second cluster science teacher have been appointed. An additional teacher for academic intervention has been retained. Investment in science manipulatives has seen dramatic progress in an already well-established science curriculum. The most imaginative use of funds has been in the purchase of two playgrounds on the main site. There is now an excellently equipped playground in which the outstanding therapy and teaching team supporting the youngest students can play and develop through the new physical activity programs.

Attendance of high school students remains a challenge. The school’s ‘SWAT Squad’ is working hard to improve this, but the fact that only 25% of students remain within the school for the whole of their academic careers indicates that this is a considerable task.

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.

Formal observations by senior staff lead to detailed debriefings and professional development opportunities. Teachers and paraprofessionals see a school, "that gives me the opportunity to learn". The professional sharing between staff enriches a combination of formal and informal professional development opportunities.

The trust and respect so well modeled by staff is a contributory factor to the outstandingly supportive culture that permeates all sites. In addition, there are very clear procedures for all aspects of the school day and student behavior which only reward good actions. Impressively, the language used and the values emphasized are exactly the same on all sites. Parents see the value of this and feel able to reinforce these values at home. Given that personal development is such a high priority for students, the school aligns very good services from within and beyond the school. Health professionals are based on all sites, with therapy staff moving between them on a daily basis. This contributes to very effective provision for health education, personal medical conditions and the healthy development of relationships. The rich network of agencies beyond the school include the YMCA, the Jewish Hospital, Queens Child Guidance Service and Police Athletic League.

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 success of the school in terms of academic progress, student behavior and organizational change has occurred through carefully identified and monitored plans. Thus, the development of the science curriculum has come about following teacher research and careful monitoring when materials were introduced. The very strong Project Arts Committee has clear goals. It has enriched the curriculum considerably by developing the art, literacy and music programs in a structured way with interim goals that focuses attention and gives clear success criteria. The school has been so effective in its initiatives and its staff so stable that some developments have come about successfully in an informal way.

As each new set of data becomes available, the school analyzes and sees what action is needed, hence the development of the curriculum for boys, the purchase of two new playgrounds and the focus on girls' achievement. This responsiveness is well modeled by all senior staff and has been taken up by the many committees within the school. The school cabinet meets very regularly and its conclusions and action points are taken back to all sites by assistant principals. The involvement of the coach, the data analyst and the parent coordinator means that all decisions are informed by curriculum needs, data evidence and parental implications. The school leadership team acts as a monitor for developments, ensuring that interim targets are met and money used wisely. Although not all teachers use information from periodic assessments and interim targets to introduce revisions as quickly as possible.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 004	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 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	
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?			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?					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	