



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Louis Simeone**

**Elementary School 007**

**80-55 Cornish Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11373**

**Principal: Sara Tucci**

**Dates of review: June 4 - 5, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Nancy Birson**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Louis Simeone School is an elementary school with 1156 students from kindergarten through grade 3. The school population comprises 1% Black, 46% Hispanic, 7% White, and 45% Asian students. The student body includes 55% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 96.2%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 75% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The dynamic leadership of the principal continues to create a cohesive school unit that has a uniform instructional practice.
- The broad and engaging curriculum energizes students and is reflected in the high quality displays of student work throughout the building.
- Parents celebrate the positive tone and high expectations of the school focused on raising student achievement.
- The school maintains a clear and updated understanding of all students' performance and progress.
- Teachers have a thorough understanding of all students' strengths and needs, and especially students in greatest need of improvement.
- The school's open and reflective professional environment encourages a strong learning community committed to continuous improvement.
- Creative parental outreach has established the expectation that parents are welcomed, equal partners in their children's academic and personal growth.
- The school tracks the outcomes of assessments and makes measured decisions around new practices and approaches to improve student outcomes.
- The school takes particular note of assessment data for its most predominant subgroup to monitor progress.
- The school runs very smoothly and promotes a safe, nurturing, environment of mutual trust and respect.

### What the school needs to improve

- Promote the use of students' assessment results to help guide modifications to school practices and curriculum development.
- Expand the current process of monitoring and evaluating school plans by developing action plans with timeframes and interim goals for all plans.
- Maximize existing collaborations between classroom teachers and content specialists to develop a deeper understanding of best practices across content areas.

## 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 Louis Simeone School is a very good school that continues to strive for excellence and considers every challenge as a stepping-stone to the next achievement. The principal has created systems and structures, and implemented uniform instructional practices that are now considered the bedrock of the school. She changed the culture of a school and parents now refer to it as a “large school with a small school attitude.” They see themselves as equal partners in their children’s education and appreciate the safe, nurturing environment in the school.

The recommendations from the prior year Quality Review have been implemented and in many instances expanded upon. The school has refined some of its plans to include short-term goals and time lines, especially as they relate to student achievement within the inquiry team, academic intervention team and pupil personnel committee. It has not yet extended this practice to whole-school goals.

The school uses data well to understand the performance and progress of its students and to modify practices to improve their outcomes. The inquiry team is supportive of a deep analysis of data to determine courses of action, as this is a high priority for the school. The focus group for the inquiry team is grade 2 English language learners. Specifically, based on review of data, students’ decoding skills are the area of emphasis. As a result of the inquiry team’s work, changes in the structure of the English as a second language push-in program have been implemented. The school is now considering changes to the grade 2 curriculum to further address the English language learner’s needs. The team’s success has inspired the school to create an inquiry team on each grade next year.

Professional development has evolved in the school as teachers have moved from apprenticeship in new curricular approaches, to teachers as mentors. This has built capacity in the ranks and helped promote collegiality through intervisitations and lunch-and-learn sessions. Teachers are provided with differentiated support through a well-planned calendar of on-site as well as off-site offerings. Teachers share good practices with one another in reading and math. This system would serve well if extended to other content area specialists and cluster teachers.

## **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 has an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, class, and grade level. Every class teacher maintains a data center. This data center provides a consistent structure that serves as a repository for all student assessment data such as Acuity, running records, conference notes, rubrics, student work and student self-assessment. Teachers constantly update data to include teaching points and next steps for individual students and the whole class. Students update their own folders with next steps and goals they are working towards. These centers have also improved the administration's ability to monitor interim progress on the school's long-term goals.

The school has a majority of English language learners represented by different ethnicities. The school monitors the progress of ethnic groups, home language and gender groups. English language learners continue to make steady progress in both English language arts and math. Data also indicated that Asian students were progressing in all content strands of math faster than Hispanic students. Further analysis determined that language was a determining factor for the Hispanic students. As a result, the school is actively seeking the support of parents to enroll students in bilingual classes. In the interim, the school has conducted more targeted, small-group support for the Hispanic students in math.

The administration is constantly seeking out various data indicators to support their work with teachers and students. The principal reviews and analyzes the progress report cards of schools within her peer group and schools with large English language learner populations in order to determine which schools experience success.

**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 school uses a wide range of well-established assessment procedures that allow for teachers to gather multiple views of student achievement. This has resulted in the establishment of various committees that help in setting whole school long-term goals and clear dates for completion.

Teachers collaborate well within horizontal and vertical grade meetings to discuss student data and their own research questions. They are assisted by the literacy and math coaches in understanding the skills, strategies and habits the students exhibit and the clear next steps they will look to as they move students along a learning continuum. Evidence of success is seen in the students' steady progress within the expected timeframes. The school continues its rigorous oversight of students in greatest need of

improvement. English language learners are engaged in a supplemental reading program, which uses the good practices of shared reading and read-alouds with accountable talk to increase vocabulary development.

The message of high expectations is communicated effectively through words and actions. As equal partners in their children's education, parents are provided with specific suggestions on how to help them achieve. The school has instituted a "Mommy and Me" program for parents with younger siblings. Parents receive resources to promote social skills and oral language development. The school also regularly conducts math workshops and parents leave with a toolkit to continue the skill building activities at home with their children. Parents are especially appreciative of the principal's open door policy, which is expressed, as "We don't think she has a door."

**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 principal has successfully unified and broadened the curriculum for all content areas. Classroom instruction is interesting and compelling for students and they willingly share their work and the personal goals they set as learners. Student work is on display in the classrooms and on hallway bulletin boards where it is accessible to students and parents and serves as exemplars of the high expectations the school conveys. The principal and her cabinet set clear expectations around accountability by conducting daily walkthroughs. Students and teachers see their presence in the classrooms as a welcome and routine occurrence. The principal is very thoughtful and methodical in the selection of new and promising approaches to raising student achievement. With the assistance and input of staff new programs in vocabulary and phonics were introduced to supplement classroom instruction. Teachers' research and documentation of student outcomes ensures that the programs are suitable and well matched to students' needs. This provides the school with a clear picture of which programs work for the staff and the students and has built capacity for teachers as trainers.

There is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development. Parents, in particular, state that the adults set a positive and respectful tone. Students are encouraged to write thank-you notes regularly to parent volunteers as a motivation of creating authentic context and having an audience for their writing. Likewise, parents consider that teachers "go the extra mile" for the students. Teachers collegially plan during their preparation and lunch periods.

**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 initially provided intense and specialized professional development when implementing new curricula in English language arts and math. After having established this groundwork, and succeeding in embedding the structures and systems in classes, administrators now strategically plan professional development based upon needs ascertained through frequent learning walks, formal classroom visits, and the review of the data centers. The school's long-term plan of moving from scaffolded professional development to "teachers as mentors" based on individual strengths, is evident in the shared learning lunches, intervisitations, grade meetings and study groups around required text. Teachers appreciate that the principal recognizes their positive attributes. One outcome of good professional development and scheduled teacher meetings is the institution of literacy practices of accountable talk, journal writing and explicit vocabulary instruction to math, which is having a positive impact on students' problem solving skills and writing in math. This is an approach however, is not yet been applied to all content areas such as social studies and science.

The school aligns its youth development, guidance and support services around stated academic and personal development goals. As a result of its deeper analysis of home language, the school has hired a bilingual guidance counselor and has contracted successfully for services by a community organization that specializes in working with the Asian population. This has enabled more students to receive individual or group counseling in their home language.

**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.**

Teachers ensure students know exactly how well they are progressing and precisely what they need to do next to improve. Each student makes these goals public orally and in writing. The administration conducts different interim checks to ensure teachers and students are on track to meet the targets. The school does not yet consistently apply interim goals and timeframes to all plans. An informal process does take into account the actions required and by when, but lacks sufficient clarity for indicators of progress. As a result, the school's ability to measure its progress towards achieving final targets is hampered. The school tracks the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and uses the results to make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes. They have opened self-contained English as a second language classes as a result of review of Hispanic students' longitudinal data in English language arts. They continue their research into a dual language program and plan to add this approach to their current configuration of English language learning with the inclusion of Asian students.

The principal looks continually at student achievement as a guide to future planning. The school reaches out to the schools that receive their grade 3 students to track students' performance on grades 4 and 5 State summative assessments. The data gleaned has resulted in implementing positive changes to its own curriculum to improve student outcomes. The school plans to expand the longitudinal analysis to data review by ethnic group and home language to help determine its students' instructional needs.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Louis Simeone</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<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 . . .	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	
<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 . . .	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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				X	

<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, 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

<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 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>