



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Crocheron School

Elementary School 41

**214-43 35th Avenue
Queens
NY 00000**

Principal: Sari Latto

Dates of review: October 30-31, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Denis Pittman & Joy Richardson

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Crocheron School is an elementary school with 424 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 14% Hispanic, 40% White, and 43% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance in 2006 – 2007 was 95.6%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

A District 75 school shares the same building. A very productive working relationship has been established between the schools. In many classes students from both schools share the same resources and learning opportunities.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is very effective in collecting and utilizing information about students' achievement at classroom and grade level.
- The school has created a highly supportive and caring environment where the needs of the individual are paramount.
- Teachers are highly skilful, providing engaging instruction, which enables students to make exceptional progress.
- The information provided to parents about the progress and achievements of their children is exemplary.
- The school does an exceptional, professional job in conveying its objectives and aspirations to both students and parents.
- The administration provides high-quality support for new teachers enabling them to settle in quickly to the school's customs and practices.
- The principal is highly respected and has been very successful in nurturing a strong commitment to shared values by the whole school community.
- School procedures are very efficient providing a safe, orderly environment for students to blossom and develop.
- A challenging curriculum is enhanced by an innovative and stimulating enrichment program which promotes students interests and personal development.
- The principal handles the budget in a very efficient and effective manner being very creative in the use of resources to enhance student learning and development.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to provide support and develop management systems to enable staff to use new forms of assessment data to improve their instruction.
- Explore ways of providing further opportunities for teachers to watch other colleagues teach in order to share good practice.

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's excellent management and visionary leadership are key components in the success of this welcoming, well-managed school. The parents greatly value the high quality care and consideration, which is shown for the individual students. The administration plans its development very effectively on the basis of the detailed information it gathers. Staff enjoy a highly productive partnership with families with whom they work closely. Teaching is stimulating and engaging, building very successfully upon the interests and motivation of students. The curriculum provides a significant range of opportunities for students to realize their potential. Students enjoy coming to school, they feel safe and cared for. A remark often made by parents was, "The school is an extension of my family." The school recognizes the need to provide continuing support for the teachers in the use of assessment data and to provide opportunities for them to learn about good practice by increased observation of colleagues. The school has successfully addressed all the issues arising from the previous Quality Review which included improved use of technology and more effective curriculum mapping in social studies. An inquiry team has been set up and has already met several times. The focus for the team is monitoring the achievement of those students who have made less progress than expected.

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 principal and members of the inquiry team have set in place very effective systems to gather information about how well students are performing. The effective collation of data provides a comprehensive basis to sensitively drive the process of improvement in students' performance. The data collection includes comparisons of the progress made by different classes within the grades, and between different grades. The data systems are based on the regular collation of standardized tests and teacher assessments. The school has used these comparisons to identify students who have not made a full year's gain in performance. Not all faculty members are equally conversant with how to use assessment information to plan and improve their instruction. The principal has recognized this and plans for all staff to receive training, particularly in relation to the new assessment systems that are being set in place which provide more comprehensive information.

Class teachers keep a close check on the progress made by the individual students in their class. Assessment binders are very detailed and systematically completed. Staff have a very good understanding of the learning needs of special education students and English

language learners. As a result, their performance improves well. Detailed diagnostic assessments help contribute to this understanding. The extensive use of specialist staff and academic support programs provide supplementary data to enhance the profile about students. The principal actively promotes the rapid and efficient exchange of information between families and the range of external and internal specialist staff. As a result of the good quality teaching and effective support for students, they make significant progress.

The principal checks on the progress and performance of ethnic groups where there are sufficient students to make the information statistically valid. Even though some groups are currently small, the school maintains a flexible approach to data analysis in order to adjust to changing circumstances. As a high-performing school the principal keeps a close eye on past performance to ensure the maintenance of standards. Comparisons with the performance of similar schools are systematically undertaken and where appropriate the school utilizes approaches, which help to drive up achievement even further.

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 makes very effective use of the information it has collected in order to set the next steps for individual students, classes, grades and groups of students. Overarching goals, such as the focus on developing reading and writing in all content areas, are set at the whole school level as a result of a very extensive collaborative process. These goals are expertly reinterpreted in terms of interim measurable outcomes for students. The school has used its comprehensive data files to identify a specific group whose performance is in need of improvement. An inquiry team is undertaking systematic investigation of a sample of students who did not make the expected annual gains in performance. The students are primarily those who normally work at a level 3 or level 4, but whose level of progress has not been sustained.

Staff are skillful at promoting the performance of those students who have trouble in sustaining progress. Specialist staff, such as a social worker and psychologist, work closely with teachers to identify accurately the nature of the problems that the students are having. They do this with sensitivity and understanding, and this is reflected in the detailed discussions they have about students.

Parents are very pleased with the way in which the school treats them as partners in the education of their children. The school has actively promoted a “Parents as Art Partners” program, which supports the involvement of parents in sharing art experiences and developing skills alongside their children. The quality of information collated and provided by staff, for parents, about their child's progress is exceptionally high. Students are given the clearest indication of how well they are performing and parents are informed of the nature of support systems which are in place if help is required. This process means that all students know what challenging steps they need to take next. One student said, “The teachers are very encouraging. They push us to do things so we can do our best.” Expectations among everyone in the school and among parents are very high. The principal incorporates these expectations well into the school’s formal development planning. Parental surveys provide an open to communication forum and enable concerns to be addressed as well as identifying high levels of satisfaction.

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 provides an innovating, stimulating curriculum that students really enjoy. The enrichment program is particularly well liked by all students as it enables them to develop other interests outside of normal curriculum areas. Teachers develop courses of study based on students’ interest as well as their own passions. The school addresses the learning needs of talented students particularly well through research based projects. This program effectively enhances the students’ independent learning skills. The high quality curriculum provides a backdrop for teachers to provide interesting lessons that inspire students to work hard and want to learn. Teachers are skillful in planning instruction that matches up with the different needs of the students in the class.

The principal continually searches for ways of creatively utilizing the school’s resources and budget in order to extend the learning experiences of students. The curriculum is particularly impressive in music. Lessons are challenging and especially enjoyed by students. The formal lessons are complemented by a significant range of musical opportunities after-school. Parents comment enthusiastically about the range and quality of extra curricular opportunities such as ballroom dancing. The budget has been used very effectively to reduce class sizes. This commitment is a significant factor in the promotion and maintenance of high levels of student achievement.

There is a high level of mutual trust and respect around the school. Staff single out the principal for the way she empowers and supports staff. As one teacher remarked, “We celebrate, we laugh, we cry together; the school is a family; it is unusually cohesive.” In a similar manner students get on very well with each other, being both considerate and helpful. Parents talk about the “family atmosphere” as being the reason for their strong association and commitment to school.

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

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The principal fosters very effective teamwork, though she is the sole administrator. Professional development for teachers is thoughtfully orchestrated to meet both school and individual needs. This is very effective for those who are new to the school where every effort is made to enable them to adjust to the expectations of the school and the needs of the students. The support includes a structured mentoring program and a ‘buddy’ system involving the experienced staff. The school is managed very well under the leadership of the principal. All members of the school community say that the principal manages the school collaboratively and effectively, and that this helps to reinforce good quality relationships at all levels.

The training that teachers have received has been very well focused on the “balanced literacy” program which is promoting improving standards in writing and competence in reading. Staff are exceptionally proficient in conferencing, recording progress, and in developing assessment portfolios. Teachers value the principal’s use of formal observations, which provides them with good feedback and with a well-structured individual analysis for improving their skills. Classroom teaching is also closely monitored

by the literacy coach, but opportunities for teachers to observe each other are not fully developed, although team planning is extremely strong. The climate of the school is very positive, with good discipline, organization and communication.

The school has developed effective partnerships with outside organizations that work well to promote students' well-being and academic achievement. For example, there is a strong link with Young Audiences, which offers classes in musical theater. The school has also received a grant from the Feinstein Charitable Foundation to provide journals for students to keep track of their good deeds in relation to others. The involvement with this foundation epitomizes a core value of the school, which seeks to confirm respect for the individual.

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.

Staff work hard, through regular individual conferences with students, to make sure that each student knows exactly how well they have done and what they need to do next in order to improve. Well-established procedures enable the school to measure the progress of the different groups, classes and grades. Intermediate "stepping-stones" regarding student and teacher outcomes are clearly identified so that progress towards larger objectives are carefully monitored. The success of the implementation of the "balanced literacy" program is evidence of this. The outcomes are part of a continuing evaluative dialogue with the whole faculty.

The administration and faculty have worked hard to make sure that there is a careful evaluation of each individual student's progress through the development of common rubrics. Staff have involved students in this process of evaluation. The creation and preliminary work of the inquiry team has already established a clear preliminary strategy for raising student achievement for specific students. The school has gone a long way to providing goals for targeted groups such as English language learners and students with special educational need. Support staff meet together with teachers regularly to evaluate the progress made by special education students and by those students whose progress is of concern. During these meetings, goals and strategies are adjusted to ensure that each student remains firmly on track.

The school is pro-active in making plans to utilize the more precise information such as predictive assessments, from the city changes in data management. This development should enhance an already substantial base of informative data about students, which drives instruction planning. The principal has a clear, comprehensive program for improvement and development which has evolved from collaborative discussions with the faculty. Through her tireless work and open style of leadership, she has made sure that everyone, including staff, parents and students, is fully aware of her vision. She has created a very effective context for this vision to be continually realized.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Crocheron 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 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 make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?					X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X	