



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Chris Galas School

Elementary-Middle School 047

**9 Power Road
Queens
NY 11693**

Principal: Patricia Tubridy

Dates of review: February 7- 8, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Diana Shepherd

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Chris Gallas School is an elementary-middle school with 269 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 7% Black, 9% Hispanic, 80% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 8% 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 92.4%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

This is a small and well-established school serving the island community of Broad Channel.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The good leadership of the principal and assistant principal clearly sets the framework for improvement.
- Whole school planning has a clear focus on strategies to improve achievement and student progress.
- The school collects a wide range of data that enables it to track students' achievements and progress carefully.
- The school has good data analysis systems to evaluate its progress towards individual and whole school goals.
- There is a rigorous use of data to monitor and inform student goals.
- The newly introduced Core Knowledge curriculum enables students to practice their literacy and math skills in other subjects.
- Teacher and guidance teams work closely together to support and promote the needs of special education students.
- The culture of collaboration and respect ensures that all staff benefit from good professional development.
- Students enjoy school and feel valued and safe.
- The school is well respected in the community and both attendance and behavior are good because students enjoy coming to school.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the good differentiated instruction evident in most classes is consistent across the school.
- Encourage more parents to participate in whole school planning sessions.
- Fully develop partnerships in the local community.

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.

Chris Gallas is a well-established school that works in a highly focused manner. Parents respect the principal and are happy that the school is small and safe. The school population, both students and staffing, is stable. This has helped to build trust and to develop a reflective and collaborative culture.

The school has made good progress since the last review. A clear plan was put in place to address the points identified in the Quality Review and to ensure that improvements were made against each quality statement. This time they were able to provide evidence to support specific progress in each area. Professional development was given to improve differentiation and it is clear that this has had a positive impact in the majority of classes. However there is still a lack of consistency in differentiating instruction across the school.

The leadership sets high expectations for all staff and students. It has established thorough systems for self-evaluation, which ensure constant and rigorous review. School leaders use data well to set objective and time-measured targets for all students. Teaching is good and the majority of teachers plan instruction that meets the needs of all, however, some inconsistencies remain in practice. As a result, students, including special education and English language learners make good progress. The inquiry team meets weekly to monitor the progress of a targeted group of students. There was a clear rationale and good systems for the identification of those children most at risk linked to strategies to improve learning.

Teachers are well motivated through good professional development and the frequent opportunities for collaborative work. The curriculum is broad and integrates subjects in order to ensure that learning is relevant, lively and interesting. The school is beginning to develop partnerships in the local community. The school has developed a partnership with the local Bird Sanctuary which offers educational programs to support learning and to broaden the knowledge and experience of the students.

Students like coming to school and recognize that the teachers are working to provide them with a good education. Their attendance is good. They enjoy learning and understand that the school supports them to achieve their goals. "Everyone's like family" said one grade 5 student. The school helps parents understand the next steps in their children's learning and offers opportunities for them to engage in the strategic planning processes of the school. Only a small but effective group has engaged with this development and as a result is fully supportive of the school's work.

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 Chris Galas School has very good systems for collecting and using data. The leadership has systematically implemented these in order to improve instruction and impact upon student performance. As a result, all staff have a very clear picture of their strengths and the areas for development for all students and across all grades. This thorough analysis provides a good range of information, which the leadership uses well to make strategic decisions and to measure overall performance. As a result, all groups make good progress. It is a small school and the teachers know all the students very well but the focus on data has ensured that academic rigor is consistent across all grades. There are few special education students and English language learners but good teamwork and use of data means that they receive effective support. School leaders have made a thorough analysis of progress in comparison with local schools that shows a favorable picture.

There are good management systems and structures in the school. Comparisons are made with similar schools and this further supports the leadership's high expectations. The achievement of all groups is tracked and their progress is evaluated in order to plan effective programs to support meeting their goals.

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 has used the outcomes of the previous quality review to inform its development planning. The leadership sets the expectation for improvement and is not afraid to ask difficult questions in order to ensure success. Their analysis of data has enabled them to establish rigorous goals for whole school improvement. The on-going use of interim assessments provides an effective means of measuring the achievement of these goals. The process is collaborative, strategic and is consistent across all groups and grades. This ensures that the school has a clear picture of the performance of all students, even the smallest group.

The leadership shares its vision and the goals set to achieve this with the staff and parents. The principal and assistant principal have high expectations for themselves, teachers and students. Parents appreciate this and like the open door culture in the school. Regular parent-teacher meetings, report cards and many opportunities for informal exchange ensure that all parents know their children's goals and grade levels. They support learning through homework and many attend the workshops offered to improve their own skills. Parents are encouraged to participate in the planning activities at the end of the school year. In addition, the school has offered training in the use of the Acuity data to deepen parents' understanding of their children's learning needs. All

parents fully support the school but only a few have taken the opportunities offered to engage in the strategic planning aspects of the school's work.

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.

Balanced Literacy and Everyday Math provide useful levels of performance data, which the teachers use to measure progress towards goals. They also use this data to help ensure that differentiated instruction meets the needs of all students. Differentiation is well developed in some grades but there is a lack of consistency in the practice overall. The implementation of the Core Knowledge curriculum has been a very positive development. It was introduced because of weak performance in science and social studies and offers an integrated curriculum framework, bringing together all subjects thematically. Teachers plan activities together at grade level and many of the tasks are hands-on. This has proved motivating particularly for the boys. Teachers and students have received this curriculum with enthusiasm. There is some excellent work on display in the school lobby bringing together history and art. The after-school program offers extra tutoring for all under-performing students to help them catch up. In addition, there is a range of clubs offering sports and other activities that helps students refine their skills and knowledge. The school leaders use data well to inform budgetary decisions. Overall school organization is driven by the vision to improve achievement and to further sustain good progress.

Relationships throughout are good and it is evident that students are confident and have good self-esteem. The close community enables this positive culture to thrive and the school fosters it further by listening to students and providing them with a safe and stimulating place to learn. There are good systems in place for monitoring lateness and attendance, including incentives for 100% attendance. As a result, the percentage of students attending regularly has risen since the end of last year from 92.4% to 95.56%. This exceeds the goal set by the chancellor.

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 and her assistant keep the quality of teaching and learning under constant review. They carry out a rigorous program of observation in all classes. As a result of this they plan and implement a thorough and varied professional development program. Teachers enjoy regular training for new initiatives and programs as well as specific coaching in order to reach their professional goals. Grade conferences and co-planning provide scheduled opportunities for teachers to collaborate on data analysis and evaluation. Subject teachers are scheduled to work across the whole school in partnership with class teachers. This provides a lively learning environment for staff and students alike. In addition, teachers and paraprofessionals are invited to many informal sessions, such as "lunch and learn", which help to sustain good relationships as well as

providing a focus on the development of both academic and curricular expertise. The principal and the assistant regularly meet each teacher in “Academic Expectation” meetings to discuss student progress towards goals and to ensure that the data is being used rigorously to inform differentiated instruction. As a result, teaching is good and new teachers praise the levels of support and coaching they receive. Overall, Chris Galas is a school where learning for all is valued and where staff feels that their work is acknowledged and celebrated.

The teachers and guidance teams work closely together to identify and address barriers to learning. They have systematic approaches to collecting and evaluating progress data and use it well to develop hypotheses and draw conclusions about strategies to support students’ learning.

The school is beginning to reach out to the wider community to develop partnerships. Currently these relate to student participation in local charitable enterprises. The newly established relationship with the local wildlife park offers potential for a wide range of curriculum enrichment linked to the new Core Knowledge program.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

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

The school systems ensure that all goals are subject to regular review and revision. The leadership has a clear understanding of the progress all students and staff make towards their goals. The recent introduction of Scantron, an electronic data system, is a positive addition, enabling them to have a clear overview of progress over time. Self-evaluation is aligned with budget setting in order to ensure that the resources of the school fully support the requirements for improvement. School leaders use the systems well and regularly evaluate progress towards achievement of strategic goals in order to identify the next steps for improvement.

Teachers use data well to track and revise goals as necessary. The principal and the school community know their strengths and are keen to ensure that all aspects of the school’s work are kept under constant review in order to sustain the good progress made by students to date.

The principal and the assistant principal provide very good leadership to the school. They have a clear vision for the students in the school. They understand the needs of the community and build upon these to develop high expectations for learning and aspirations for future life. This vision drives the school.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Chris Gallas 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 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