



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Henry Eichler

Elementary School 056

**86-10 114 Street
Queens
NY 11418**

Principal: Ann Leiter

Dates of review: April 3 - 4, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Lysbeth Bradley

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Harry Eichler is an elementary school with 461 students from grade 2 through grade 5. The school population comprises 9% Black, 35% Hispanic, 9% White, and 46% Asian and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 95.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 61% eligibility.

The school has one gifted (ASTRE) class on each grade level; a grade 2 a self-contained class for English language learners, with push-in support on grades 3, 4 and 5; a self-contained class for special education students in grade 5 and collaborative team teaching classes in grades 2 and 4.

The school has no space for a library and limited physical education facilities, particularly in inclement weather.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The administration, faculty and parents are united in their aim of enabling all students to become confident and questioning, self-directed learners.
- Highly effective systems and training support teachers in their consistent use of a wide range of data and teacher assessments.
- Students in all grades enjoy school and are fully involved in evaluating their own work and in setting new goals.
- The school is very well attuned to parents' needs, and has established innovative approaches to securing extremely beneficial partnerships.
- All staff are committed to rigorous curriculum development and planning in order to deepen and broaden students' learning opportunities.
- Strategic planning is of a high order and maximizes all available resources to drive improvement and raise achievement.
- Professional development is very well differentiated and strongly underpins goal setting at individual, group and whole school level.
- The school is very creative in its use of technology to enthuse students and engage them actively in learning.
- Comprehensive, well-planned monitoring of teaching and learning is highly effective in bringing about change and developing consistent practice.
- Strongly reflective practice across all teams leads to thoughtful revisions and realignment of plans and interventions for individuals and groups.

What the school needs to improve

- Make interim goals and benchmarks more specific to sharpen the implementation and evaluation of whole school initiatives.
- Deepen the analysis of progress data to determine the long-term progress of individual students and groups during their time in the school.
- Extend opportunities for cross-grade communication in order to develop further the good work in establishing continuity and progression in learning.

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 sets the tone for teaching and learning by ensuring that staff and students are set up to succeed. Every action has a clear purpose and is planned meticulously. She communicates her vision, not only through words, but also by setting specific goals and implementing defined initiatives, which complement and support each other. As the next stage in achieving its long-term aim of developing self-directed learners, the school is implementing the professional learning standards, focusing initially on promoting student engagement. Although these goals are specific, the school has not yet established interim benchmarks to ensure that evaluation is as rigorous as other elements of improvement planning. High expectations are explicitly articulated through the regular setting and reviewing of individual student goals in reading, writing and math. Students know precisely what they are aiming for and what they have to do to get there because of the thorough way that grade teams develop rubrics for each unit of work.

The school has developed a wide range of assessment tools, having thoroughly researched their potential. Administrators and teachers have a clear view of the performance and progress of each student, class and grade, but the available data has not been sufficiently reliable until recently to enable the school to begin to track progress longitudinally. Because of careful implementation, teachers have a comprehensive range of data at their disposal and the necessary training and support to ensure that they use it effectively and consistently. This thoughtful approach to assessment and testing means that teachers are increasingly confident in gauging how high each student can aim, whether they are in a self-contained class for English language learners or special education students, or in one of the classes for gifted students from across the district. As a further way of communicating high expectations, the school has developed strong partnerships with parents through a wide range of strategies, some of which are truly innovative and of great benefit to students and parents alike.

Since the last review, the school has made great strides in developing a consistent approach to record keeping and in setting measurable goals with all its students. The administration now regularly considers progress data in relation to ethnicity, gender and other pertinent groupings. The school leadership has increased the frequency with which it reviews whole school goals and instigates revisions. The many varied and interesting ways in which the school uses technology goes from strength to strength.

The inquiry team has identified a group of grade 5 students in two general education classes, many achieving at Levels 3 and 4, whose progress has slowed. Close observations of students' learning and frequent assessments has enabled those staff involved to identify where blocks to learning exist and to introduce remedial strategies.

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 made further strides in developing its use of data. This ensures that administration and faculty have a complete and up-to-date picture of the performance and progress of each student, class and grade to inform all decisions relating to grouping, curriculum and instruction. Teachers keep detailed diagnostic records in reading, writing and math, which derive from rubrics that grade teams take responsibility to develop, review and realign. High quality teacher assessment enables the administration and grade teams to look critically at results of predicative and periodic assessments, as well as performance and progress data from the City to ensure that each student receives appropriate support and interventions. The principal has established highly effective data management systems and has ensured that all teachers have thorough training in the use of data. Consequently, teachers have an excellent understanding of the purpose of each diagnostic tool. They are committed to making the best possible use of the wide range of complementary information to accelerate the progress of individuals and groups.

Teachers are secure in their use of data to identify next steps for special education students and English language learners. Extensive work in enabling all members of faculty to understand how to take full account of individual education plans when differentiating instruction is beginning to make an impact. The school has made good progress in analyzing data in relation to gender and ethnicity, and has taken action to improve reading materials to motivate boys and raise standards. Until recently, the school has not had sufficiently reliable longitudinal data to enable the administration to measure accurately the progress that individuals and groups make during their four years in the school. The principal is now poised to deepen data analysis further in order to measure the long-term progress of individuals and groups.

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 extremely robust goal-setting procedures for individual students and for those groups whose progress is a focus for improvement. Students' involvement in evaluating their own work in reading, writing and math is embedded in the school's culture. This is a key part of the school's thrust to develop self-directed learners. Teachers and students work together to set "next step" goals based on self-evaluation and sharp diagnostic assessment. Together, they regularly revise these goals against clear criteria. Through this process, raised expectations are communicated to students and parents. It is also a highly effective way of securing the commitment of both parties.

The school has developed innovative and highly effective ways of involving parents in their children's education and in engaging them as full partners in the learning process.

The principal and her staff have built so many successful partnerships because they have taken the time to understand parents' needs and have valued their input into their child's education. There is a real awareness of the need to support the learning of all family members in order to realize each student's potential. For the first three months of the school year, there are nightly workshops for parents that cover every subject and every grade with students involved where appropriate. The school arranges a large number of well-planned and very popular educational visits to places such as Bronx zoo, New York waterways, Broadway theatre, the circus and Renaissance Faire. These visits fulfill their objective of broadening horizons very well. The school also provides individual family tutoring sessions where the teacher models how the parent can work with their child. Both parents and teachers attest to the effectiveness of this approach in putting a child back on track with their parent's support and building confidence.

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.

Evaluation and research underpin all decisions related to curriculum planning and the introduction of new programs. Grade teams are actively involved in developing and refining rubrics, which align with State standards and provide an effective way of ensuring consistency in planning and assessment. The school gives equal attention to providing the right context for learning and the right level of challenge for groups, including special education students, English language learners and gifted students in the ASTRE classes. The range of opportunities within and outside the school day is carefully chosen to meet identified needs. For example, the school enrichment model has been introduced for students in grades 2 and 3 and has proved very effective in engaging them in active learning with opportunities to make choices and pursue an interest in depth. As one of them said, "It's even more reason to come to school".

The principal and senior leaders are very resourceful in securing grants to support innovative approaches to teaching and learning. The school has a real understanding of project management and plans effectively for success. The principal attempts nothing without having put the necessary resources, staffing and professional development securely in place. Each initiative starts on a small scale and builds incrementally, drawing on experience to refine practice before school-wide implementation. This is particularly evident in the impressive way in which the school has developed technological resources to encourage the creativity and expand learning opportunities. Grade 5 students are working at the cutting edge in using technology to enhance their learning. During the review, they were learning how to produce an animated film through videoconferencing with an English school whose students acted as mentors. The high quality of the work in this grade comes through very careful planning and resourcing in the earlier grades to enable the students to achieve such high standards.

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 takes a strategic approach to professional development with almost all staff demonstrating an strong commitment to improving their practice. Training and support are very well differentiated. Supervisors undertake robust monitoring of teaching and learning which ensures that needs are extremely well met and new initiatives carefully supported. Classroom observations link closely to the professional learning standards. Teachers' goals derive from self-evaluation and feedback from supervisors against the standards. The school has recently introduced improved procedures for supporting new teachers to the profession, so that goals are agreed and commitment secured.

There is a strong collaborative culture where everyone works for the same ends. This is assisted by making time available for staff to meet together during the school day for planning and professional development. Grade teams work effectively to plan, monitor and evaluate the curriculum and instruction. There have been some opportunities for cross-grade collaboration, but more is needed if the school is to achieve greater continuity in learning and the progressive development of what and how students learn.

Harry Eichler is a thriving learning community because students and teachers want to be there. Routines are unobtrusive and followed by everyone. Students feel safe and well supported, and both they and their parents know how hard their teachers work to meet their personal, emotional and academic needs.

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 approaches self-evaluation in the same thorough and collaborative way that it undertakes all its work. All members of the school community understand what the principal wants for the students and how she and her staff are working to achieve it. The principal makes it clear how one goal relates to another and how initiatives in one grade build on and lead into work in another. The administration takes good notice of feedback and data to reflect on what is working well and where action has to be taken.

There are well-established systems that promote consistent and reflective practice across all teams. This ensures that all information from periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures is examined honestly and leads to thoughtful realignment and revisions to plans. It also ensures that identified interventions and new programs match the needs of individuals and groups. The work of the fluency team is one such example where a radical change of approach is making a positive impact on progress in reading.

Teachers have established very effective goal setting procedures with individual students that also link with goal setting for groups, classes and grades. Interim benchmarks and goals drive instruction and the curriculum. Students and parents receive regular, helpful feedback of "glows" and "grows" which keeps everyone on track and eager to do well. The school has supplemented its Comprehensive Education Plan with action plans that map out and track the progress of whole school initiatives. The senior leadership team now reviews these plans regularly and makes adjustments. Although these plans are detailed and have timeframes, interim benchmarks and goals are not sufficiently specific to enable the school to assess just how well it is doing, to celebrate successes along the way and to fine tune plans, resources and deployment.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Harry Eichler	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