



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The School of Heroes**

**Elementary School 058**

**72-74 Grand Avenue**

**Queens**

**NY 11378**

**Principal: Adelina Valastro Tripoli**

**Dates of review: March 14 and 17, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Corinne Brown**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The School of Heroes, Public School 58, is an elementary school with 945 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 1.8% Black, 32.2% Hispanic, 33% White, and 32.3% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for the other 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 95.1%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school opened in September 2002. It is named for the heroes who worked in the Maspeth community, such as firefighters, police officers and emergency service workers, who lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

The school has increasing numbers of enrolled general education students, special education students and English language learner students. Each grade has a collaborative team-teaching class, except grade 6. There are four self-contained classes: one on kindergarten, grades 4, 5 and 6. The self-contained classes on kindergarten and grade 2 are new this year, as they are created in kindergarten and grade 4 to meet changing needs in the student population.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The well-respected principal's strong leadership has established an organized and effective school with a stimulating learning environment.
- The cabinet cohesively reviews progress and provides comprehensive professional development that meets staff and student needs.
- Students are enthusiastic about the varied programs and interesting learning experiences provided by staff that care for them.
- The school uses a wide range of internal and external data well to measure performance and progress.
- The dedicated staff work hard to create motivating and interesting lessons that promote student success.
- Very high expectations are made explicit, with student achievement continually encouraged and celebrated in varied media throughout the school.
- Parents' support is strong and they appreciate the good rapport and communication with staff in this safe school that challenges their children.
- Staff collaborate well, freely share best practices and model respectful interpersonal relationships for students.
- Support from teachers and service providers means English language learners, special education and "at risk" students make sound progress.
- Teachers know their students well and smaller class sizes enable more personalized learning.

### What the school needs to improve

- Refine goal setting across the school so that goals are always specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-referenced.
- Evaluate the impact on student performance and progress of initiatives such as the "Tip books" and the intensive research academies.
- Make whole school goals more explicit for the wider school community to increase ownership.

## 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.**

Since opening the School for Heroes the principal has established a strong team of staff dedicated to provide high quality learning opportunities for all students. A continual process of review and refinement ensures the curriculum is exciting and challenging. Stimulating experiential learning motivates the students. The school is recognized as a Citywide model for the school enrichment model, in which students develop critical thinking skills through thematic, hands-on learning projects. Other schools visit to observe this, in particular the social studies and technology instruction.

The school successfully uses multiple forms of data to understand student and school performance and progress over time. It demands the best from its students and staff. Differentiation is established practice in this school. Staff work well together to creatively plan stimulating lessons that engage and challenge students. Students in need of support make good progress as a result of comprehensive and well targeted interventions. All relationships are characterized by respect. Attendance is very good and students really feel that staff care about them. Parental involvement is strong and communication is thorough. Although there is a collective vision, whole-school goals are not always clearly understood by the whole school community. Wide ranging and effective professional development is linked to school, teacher and student needs. Goals are realistic and firmly rooted in data across the school. In some cases, they are not yet always sufficiently specific and measurable, particularly as students have begun to set their own goals. The school is rigorously involved in a process of continual refinement of practice at all levels, but does not always evaluate the impact of key initiatives and practices.

The school embraced the recommendations from the previous review. Data on student writing is systematically tracked and methods of giving students better feedback are being trialed. The school has several effective partnerships that support students' holistic development. Trends and patterns in subgroup and group performance inform resources, support and modification to instructional practice. The inquiry team works well. Their target group is students within grade 4 and focuses on achievement data, attendance and other indicators. The chosen skill focus is inference within English language arts. Interventions are programmed and findings are shared among staff.

## **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 comprehensive, well-organized systems to collect and analyze data from multiple sources. Internal and external hard and soft data measure performance and progress. Information is clearly presented in color-coded graphs and charts to facilitate interpretation and understanding. Customized Acuity assessments aid computer tracking of individuals. The school uses Scantron for regular reading, math and writing assessments for each student, class and grade. In this way the cabinet has a thorough overview of performance and progress. Information is shared with faculty through grade and individual meetings with the principal, assistant principal or coaches. Teachers take ownership and devise action plans based on these analyses. In classrooms, teachers organize data organize well in assessment binders and portfolios and use it carefully in planning.

The school rigorously monitors its increased population of special education students and English language learner. It has excellent data on language acquisition progress. Timely interventions and mandated services mean these students continue to show growth. The school has a very good understanding of subgroups by ethnicity, gender and achievement. Test results are similar for boys and girls in all grades, except grade 6. Hispanic students achieve less well than other groups across the school. Initiatives to address these perceived anomalies are in place and show positive impact. The school notes trends in school, grade, class and group progress and performance over time. It has received several recognitions as a high performing, gap closing school, particularly for its work with minority groups. The school is not complacent and continues to improve its practice, particularly as the student demographic alters. It rigorously compares its performance with other schools in the area and those with similar populations. Staff are given comprehensive, differentiated and ongoing training in the use of data. Technology in every class facilitates access to information in addition to the use of e-mail and hard copy.

**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 collaborates at all levels, facilitated by regularly scheduled meetings as well as informal consultation. School leadership, cabinet, grades, teachers and students set goals. The Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal's performance review have clear, measurable and related goals. Although the school community works with common purpose, whole-school goals are not always clearly understood by all constituents. Students have begun to set their own goals based on conferences with teachers. "Tip books" have been introduced this year to improve feedback to students on their writing. Students find them helpful, but their impact on student writing has not been formally evaluated. Teachers make real life connections to harness interest of

groups such as Hispanic boys. Students “at risk”, special education students and English language learners make good progress because of careful interventions and close work with class and cluster teachers. The instructional team conducts observations, makes suggestions and contacts parents. The academic intervention team’s weekly meetings review individual progress regularly. The case study comprehensively demonstrated that good systems are in place to meet student needs.

High expectations are evident throughout the school. Student work is high quality and high profile. Vibrant examples are celebrated daily on audio-visual screens in central locations, displayed on interactive presentation boards in hallways and presented on walls and in classrooms. The “principal’s pride” computer in the general office greets visitors with exemplary student efforts. The school communicates its expectations with parents through multiple channels, such as “Olympic” events, newsletters, differentiated vacation packets, brochures, parent calendars and orientations. “The Grand Review” highlights published student work. Parental support is strong as they appreciate the good rapport and communication with staff. They see school as a safe place where students are challenged. One parent stressed, “This school is unique. Its standards are high!”

**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 customizes the Standards-based curriculum to fit its philosophy and to meet the changing needs of its students. Workshop model best practices are used in English language arts and the mandated math curriculum. Central to the school’s curriculum is the academy intensive research model, which generates higher thinking skills. The school is an enrichment model for others. This model has been extended to all grades this year, but the impact has not yet been evaluated. Technology and the arts are infused throughout the broad, dynamic curriculum.

Teachers initially wrote and regularly revise the teaching points for the thematic studies of the academy program. They are dedicated and work hard to create vibrant, positive lessons that encourage independent thinking and encourage holistic student development. Staff are self-motivated and there is a very high degree of accountability at all levels in the school. Teachers know their students well. Differentiation is built into the curriculum and teaching points. Smaller class sizes mean that teachers are able to personalize the curriculum. Some students have a curriculum compacting contract so that learning is accelerated through higher-grade programs. The school uses the budget carefully to support student learning. There is considerable investment in technology in every classroom. Digital photography and DVDs provide alternative methods of recording progress. Touchscreens in the hallways of each wing for research are an incentive that motivates students. Three new coaches have been hired this year particularly to support new teachers, but also to carefully plan for succession due to retirement. Students affirm the school motto each day and show genuine affection for the staff and school. They are highly enthusiastic about the varied learning opportunities that are provided for them. Students trust the staff, who model respect in dealing with each other. Attendance is very good as students are motivated to come to lessons that engage them. Stringent procedures are in place to maintain this record.

**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.**

Staff selection is a rigorous procedure with exacting standards. The principal and assistant principal maintain high visibility and know their staff well. They demand much of staff but, together with the coaches, provide comprehensive support and professional development to build capacity and utilize staff strengths. Each teacher has an individualized professional development support plan. The training calendar meets student and teacher needs as indicated by data, including surveys and reflection sheets. Guided reading and the use of the SMART board are two recent examples of whole school professional development. Informal professional growth is continuous through common preparation periods, data collection periods, and grade and faculty conferences. Staff turnkey and freely share best practices to the benefit of students through collaboration and intervisitations. Unusually for this school, this year there are 18 new staff members, as a result of increasing student numbers and natural staff turnover. They feel welcomed and particularly well supported by mentors and coaches. Student support services work together effectively so that students develop socially, emotionally and academically. Effective partnerships, such as American Ballroom Dancing and Joyce Theater, enhance the curriculum and student development through varied activities including music, opera and dance. The school is a well-organized and orderly environment. Students internalize rules and routines

**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 is well organized and its stimulating environment offers exciting learning opportunities that enable students to succeed. It evaluates itself well through a continual process of reflection and refinement of practice. The school sets high goals for itself that are linked, specific and have interim checkpoints in general. The goals devised by and for students are not always specific and measurable, so that individuals can clearly measure their own progress. The performance and progress of particular groups of students are regularly monitored through diagnostic tests and assessment data, particularly by the data analysis team, so that interventions and plans are adjusted if indicated. Dual language books in Spanish and English strengthen connections between home and school for some of the English as a second language student population. The school uses compares information and tracks progress of all groups, grades and classes in order to modify the curriculum or focus to accelerate progress towards meeting its goals. Additional coaches were hired during the year so that new teachers and students are supported effectively. Interim and final outcomes of goals and plans inform the next phase of school development. Reflection times are built into the comprehensive school calendar at regular intervals. The principal is a dynamic, strong leader whose far-sighted vision when establishing the school is now firmly shared among the community. She continually seeks to improve student outcomes and implements effective systems to support change. Students are challenged, their sense of social responsibility is developed and they have fun. The school motto, "Where students strive for excellence and achieve it," is realized daily in each classroom.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

|  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>SCHOOL NAME: The School of Heroes</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>                          |