



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Francis Lewis School**

**Elementary School 079**

**147-27 15<sup>th</sup> Drive  
Queens  
NY 11357**

**Principal: Joel Schuckman**

**Dates of review: October 3 - 5, 2007**

**Reviewer: Tony Boys**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Francis Lewis is an elementary school with 825 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 0.6% Black, 13.9% Hispanic, 53.9% White and 31.5% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006–2007 was 94.9%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and assistant principal lead the school very well, engendering a very positive ethos that is based on enabling all students to achieve their potential.
- Very good teaching, within a broad and appropriate curriculum, ensures that the school meets its learning goals.
- The school conveys high expectations to all students, staff and parents, so that all are clear about the role they play in providing a very good education.
- Teachers assess the performance of individual students regularly, gaining a very clear idea of their achievements and learning needs.
- Special education students and English language learners receive very effective support from class teachers and specialists.
- The school has very good procedures for targeting support toward those who need it most.
- The school has very effective procedures for identifying its goals and making sure that instructional strategies match them.
- Day-to-day running of the school is smooth and effective and respect between students and staff is strongly evident, resulting in very good behavior and a safe and harmonious learning environment.
- Assessment data is used very effectively to underpin instructional strategies, future planning and the school's vision for the development of learning for its students.
- The school is supported by a strong and active parent teacher association that contributes considerably to its funding.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to monitor assessment binders to ensure that they provide a record of key assessment data that is focused and manageable to maintain.
- Monitor the delivery of literacy and math to ensure that standards are not affected by the loss of coaches for these subjects.
- Formalize the process in which the school enables parents and caregivers to provide information about their children's learning needs to their teachers.
- Seek ways in which to broaden the representation of parents at parent teacher associations.

## 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 Francis Lewis School is led very well by a principal and assistant principal who put the learning and achievement of all students at the heart of their activities. They convey high expectations to students, staff and parents, so that all understand the role they play in achieving the school's goals. As a result, teaching is very good and students are very well behaved and motivated to learn. The school does its best for all students and provides effective additional support for those who need it, such as special education students and English language learners.

The principal and administration ensure that instruction is effective in meeting the school's learning goals through a clear focus on assessment of individual students' achievement and use of data to modify planning and instructional strategies. This approach has enabled students to perform well on tests and assessments, with particularly good results in math. While data gathering is of high quality administrators are monitoring the collection system ensuring that it continues to be manageable and easily accessible to teachers.

The school also places great emphasis on developing social skills and good citizenship in its students. The success of this approach is evident in the very good behavior and courteous relationships seen in the school. Smooth management systems ensure that the school runs well on a day-to-day basis and provides a safe, supportive and harmonious environment for learning. Students enjoy school and their attendance is above average. The students' positive attitudes help considerably in their progress in learning.

A strong and active parent teacher association supports the school very well and raises considerable additional funding through its activities. While parents are strongly encouraged to be involved in their children's education and are welcomed into the school community parent input about their children's learning needs has not been formalized.

The school has made good progress in tackling the issues raised in the previous Quality Review. Particular effort has gone into revising the school's assessment procedures and teachers now use a common format for recording the comprehensive range of assessments that are in use. The school has also introduced grade planning days to encourage collaborative work and has adopted the Teachers' College and Everyday Math programs for delivery of the core curriculum. Arrangements to implement the inquiry team are well under way. The school has identified the team members and the team has met several times already. The inquiry team will take the progress of English language learners as its initial area of focus.

## **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 acted on recommendations made in the previous Quality Review by completely revising its arrangements for collecting and recording assessment data. Teachers now use common assessment binders that contain records of all the formal and informal assessments carried out with students. This allows them to have access to a great deal of assessment data on which to base their planning. Consequently, they have a very good understanding of the progress that individual students make. Teachers meet formally at grade conferences to discuss student progress and to plan instruction. Specialist teachers and support staff contribute to these discussions in order to plan support for special education students and English language learners. All special education, ELL and at-risk learners participate in mandated extended day and Title 3 programs to support their learning. In addition, the inquiry team has taken the progress of English language learners as its initial focus, allowing this group to have extra targeted support. Teachers' very good knowledge of the progress of individual students is a significant factor in maintaining the school's high performance.

The introduction of common assessment binders has helped to standardize the collection and analysis of data and has been supported by some additional training. Teachers appreciate the value of having a common system but they have found maintenance of the binders very time-consuming in the initial stages. The school plans to review and refine the use of the binders to ensure that they are focused and manageable, but this has not yet taken place.

**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.**

Teachers assess the learning of individual students using formal tests and informal assessment during the course of normal lessons. They keep detailed records using common assessment binders and they share information at grade conferences and informally. This ensures that they have a very clear understanding of students' progress on which to base planning and set goals for improvement. This approach has allowed the school to be particularly successful in raising the achievement of students at or below the borderline for achieving grade-level expectations. Students above the borderline also benefit from the close attention that goes into planning and setting goals. This is reflected in the high proportion of students reaching Levels 3 and 4 in literacy and especially in math, where over 95% of students have reached this level in recent years. The school has decided to focus the work of the new inquiry team on raising the achievement of English language learners with the goal of further improving literacy levels. This is a good example of the way in which assessment data has been used to set goals.

The principal shares and reinforces the school's learning goals through clear guidance given to all staff at faculty conferences. This includes identifying specific and measurable targets for improvement and student progress. The school makes great efforts to convey

its ethos and expectations to parents and to keep them informed of students' progress. It communicates with parents through newsletters, parent conferences, meet-the-teacher sessions and special bulletins, as well as informally. Parents and students attest to the effectiveness of this communication and consequently have a clear understanding of the school's high expectations. Parents also have the opportunity to provide information about their children's learning needs, though there is no formal process for this.

**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 outstanding.**

The school has extremely good procedures for ensuring that teaching and planning decisions reflect its development priorities and learning goals. Teachers base their instruction on curriculum plans that provide frequent opportunities to assess student progress in order to modify teaching strategies. Teaching is very effective and lessons are well organized to include differentiated work matched to students' needs. The curriculum is broad and balanced, with all students having the opportunity to study art and music as well as the other core subjects. The school also provides a range of optional after-school activities that give further opportunities to experience the arts. Planned future activities include drama and puppetry. All students have the opportunity to use computers in the laboratory but they are not used enough to enhance classroom learning, although some teachers are more skilled than others in this respect.

Teachers plan their work carefully to make lessons interesting and enjoyable. The principal encourages teachers to use a wide range of strategies such as, for example, problem-solving work in math. This allows the students to have some responsibility for their learning and to think for themselves. Personal responsibility and respect are encouraged and evident throughout the school. Students enjoy being at school and their attendance is above average. Strategic planning decisions, such as budgeting and staffing, are aimed at meeting the school's learning goals. This was illustrated in the school's decision to eliminate the math and literacy coach positions due to budgetary constraints. The principal plans to use the savings to provide high-quality professional development and to reduce class sizes, which would have been impossible if the coaches had been retained. The principal and assistant principal are specialists in math and literacy, respectively, and they will provide support for these subjects. Monitoring of the delivery of math and literacy to ensure that these new strategies for support are effective in maintaining standards have not yet been established. The quality of teaching, strategic planning and the curriculum contribute greatly to the school's success.

**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 runs very smoothly due to effective procedures for day-to-day management. Students and staff understand the school's expectations and there are clear procedures to encourage and reward good behavior.

The principal monitors teaching through classroom visitations and teachers have the opportunity to observe each other and share good practice through intervisitation. Teachers receive constructive feedback on their teaching and an atmosphere of professional debate is encouraged. Teaching workshops also take place, in which several teachers observe a specialist teaching a certain topic. These measures are effective in enabling teachers to refine and develop their skills. New or inexperienced teachers are given extra support through induction procedures and mentoring. Student support services are targeted very well to support students' needs. This was exemplified in an extremely effective case conference seen during the Quality Review. The efficacy of student support has had a very positive effect on students' achievement.

The school enjoys the support of a very active parent teacher association that contributes significantly to the school's funding. At present, the attendance at parent teacher association meetings and at parental workshops does not fully reflect the diversity of the school community. This is a situation that the school is keen to improve.

**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 outstanding.**

Teachers have a detailed knowledge of the learning needs of individual students, due to the effective assessment arrangements that are in place. This allows them to modify plans and teaching strategies in response to changing needs. This is done very effectively through faculty conferences, grade conferences and the pupil personnel committee. The school reviews its planning and teaching strategies periodically to ensure that they are still appropriate, modifying them as required. Planning identifies short and long-term goals more effectively than it does interim goals, although interim goals are considered in the discussion around modifying plans.

The Comprehensive Education Plan gives an overall direction to the school's development and includes specific measurable objectives for improving student performance. It is supplemented by updates and by faculty planning that sets out clear objectives for each year and for each development area. This is shared and discussed with all staff at faculty meetings. As a result of these measures the school monitors progress, modifies its plans and communicates its goals to staff very effectively. This has had a very positive influence on learning and on student progress that is evident in the school's record of high achievement.

The principal's vision for the school's future development is based on enabling all students to reach their potential. He has communicated this very well to staff, students and parents. All are very clear about the school's aims and what it stands for. Even the younger students spoken with during the Quality Review were able to say that the school was there "to get us to do our best". This clarity about the school's aims adds to its sense of community and is a key factor in its success.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Francis Lewis School (PS 079)</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 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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				X	

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>					<b>X</b>

<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?					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>					<b>X</b>

<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 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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					<b>X</b>