



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Fresh Meadow

Elementary School 173

**174-10 67 Avenue
Queens
NY 11365**

Principal: Molly Wang

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Lead Reviewer: Denis Pittman

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Fresh Meadow is an elementary school with 790 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2.7% Black, 8.8% Hispanic, 25.7% White and 62.5% Asian students. The student body includes 9.6% English language learners and 30% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year was 97%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision, is well respected by students, parents and staff and leads by example in creating a purposeful learning environment.
- The school effectively collects data to monitor the progress of special education students and English language learners.
- Relationships between students and staff are very positive, which is reflected in the care and support students receive in order to improve their achievement.
- The principal and staff effectively convey to students high expectations of behavior and performance.
- Students enjoy coming to school which is reflected in the significantly high levels of attendance.
- The school runs smoothly on a daily basis with clear and effective procedures which provides a safe environment for students.
- The school has good partnerships with the community and other agencies to enhance its instructional program in support of both students and staff.
- The communication and relationship with parents is extremely positive promoting a strong community ethos.
- Professional development is geared well to the objectives of the school and there are effective procedures for the support of new staff.
- The curriculum, through its range of content and extra curricular activities, stimulates and motivates students well.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that development plans and interim goals include clearly specified timeframes for evaluation.
- Monitor more systematically the progress of specific subgroups of students such as higher-achievers, ethnic groups and the relative performance of boys and girls.
- Develop strategies for ensuring that differentiated instruction is more consistently applied in classrooms.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to share good practice across grades in order to enhance curriculum continuity and teaching.

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.

Public School 173 provides a stimulating and interesting environment in which children can learn. The shared educational values of the principal and school community inform the school's activities and provide clear purpose and direction. The school stresses creativity, individuality and social awareness. The support and care of each individual child is central to the school's work. Teachers are effective and are willing to help and encourage students. They are committed to ensuring that their teaching should match the particular learning needs of students, although differentiation of instruction is not practiced in all classrooms. Additionally, the monitoring of the progress of specific subgroups of students is insufficiently systematic. While the school is good at developing plans and interim goals, they do not contain clear timeframes for evaluation.

Parents support the school well. They are very appreciative of the safe, caring learning environment which is being created and value greatly the progress their children make. The curriculum is designed to reflect and build upon students' interests and is very successful in engaging them. The working relationship with community-based organizations is very productive in promoting the goals of the school. Given the dedicated commitment, enthusiasm and hard work of staff, the school has the capacity to sustain its established pattern of continuous improvement.

The school has successfully addressed the areas for improvement highlighted by last year's Quality Review. They have hired a teacher to specifically support the expanded science program, their library has more leveled books and they have acquired more technology which students are using to enhance their learning. An inquiry team has been established and it is now working through the fine details of how it's going to monitor its sample group.

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 proficient.

The school has effective systems for monitoring the performance of individual students. There are standard procedures which give a consistent picture of student performance. Particularly effective is the monitoring and assessment of the progress of special education students and English language learners. The ongoing assessment of these students provides a constant update of their achievement and enables appropriate interventions to take place to support their learning. The substantial data which is collected about

individual students is aggregated well to give an overview of the performance of classrooms and specific grades. However there is insufficient use of data to assess precisely the progress of particular subgroups and to identify such factors as the potential difference between the progress of boys and girls and the relative progress of different ethnic groups.

The school analyzes well the data in relation to the past performance of students. For example, the item analysis of student responses in past English language arts papers enables staff to identify skills and competencies which need to be reinforced. Comparisons with the performance of similar schools are undertaken but progress indicators in relation to these schools are not routinely analyzed. Relevant training is provided for staff in the use of data to inform their planning and monitoring of student achievement but insufficient focus is given to the monitoring of the progress of different subgroups of students.

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 identification of the school's goals is a collaborative activity. These goals are continually referred to during grade meetings, where discussion reflects ways to improve the curriculum and the quality of instruction. A particular focus has been on identifying more precisely the learning steps of students who transfer from other schools. The school is particularly effective in responding to the outcomes of standardized test data. The analysis of this data, reflecting a fall in the reading scores of some Level 3 and Level 4 students, has become the focus of the recently established inquiry team.

The collection and interpretation of data is used well to identify the needs of individual students. For example, in English language arts there is a focus on improving narrative writing for grade 3 students. In planning meetings, staff systematically analyze the outcome of students’ writing to identify skills and competencies which need to be improved. This type of data processing also happens in other subject areas. These effective processes enable staff to share information about students’ progress. This evidence is effectively collected and collated in a portfolio of student achievement.

The principal has very high expectations which are clearly communicated to parents and students, leading to high levels of achievement. These expectations are passed on during productive orientation sessions with students, parents and staff. The expectations of staff are clearly conveyed through a detailed school report and the conference meetings which take place on a scheduled basis. Parents are appreciative of the school's “open-door policy” which encourages them to share information and to be confident in taking part in workshops arranged at the school.

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 has developed a particular strength in its instructional strategy and performance in mathematics. Effective use is made of the Teachers College units of study for the teaching of English language arts. This strategy enables a close focus on reading and writing in workshop sessions. Instructional strategies are evaluated collaboratively in grade meetings to ensure consistency and to guide teachers’ assessment and planning. Lessons are interesting and engaging, with high levels of attention and response from students. The school recognizes the need to provide continuing support and training for teachers in the use of data to ensure that teaching activities match the needs of all students in their classes. Students enjoy coming to school, and combined with effective school procedures this leads to high levels of attendance.

The school provides an appropriate core curriculum that is enriched by a wide range of clubs and activities within and beyond the school day. The science curriculum is being enriched by more opportunities for students to have lab time to enhance their scientific understanding and progress. In addition, a commitment to the arts is being accommodated through time being allocated on students’ schedules for violin lessons, recorder lessons and dancing.

The principal has made effective staffing decisions to ensure that expertise is well placed across the grades, building strong teamwork. The initiatives in science have been well supported by additional staffing, professional development and resources. These and similar budgetary decisions are efficiently aligned to the academic goals for students.

Over recent years the principal has successfully extended the climate of trust and respect among all faculty, students and parents. The school runs smoothly with very high levels of collaboration. Teachers are aware of the high expectations placed on them and feel well supported in their work.

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 has implemented robust procedures for improving teaching. They include an appropriate balance of focused walkthroughs and more formal evaluations of lessons. The more frequent observations are used to monitor everyday practice. Teachers know the focus of these in advance and welcome the professional dialogue that follows them, saying that it is developmental and supportive. The outcomes of this work are appropriately focused on improving the achievement and progress of students. The opportunities to observe each other teaching are limited although the school uses this approach to support and develop less experienced colleagues. Planning meetings, which have cross-grade membership, are also insufficiently developed but it is a professional dialogue which the school wants to encourage. Any teachers who are new to the school are particularly well supported and comment appreciatively on their induction. A full program of mentoring has been developed giving detailed feedback to teachers about the strengths of their practice and what they can improve further.

The support and guidance programs for students are particularly strong. The school has effectively developed a detailed strategy involving procedures relating to eligibility identification, the type of support services available for students, analysis and needs assessments based on “running records” and teacher observations. These procedures are carefully aligned to the academic and personal development goals of individual students.

There is a supportive and confident climate across the school with a clear focus on improving the quality of student’s learning. This leads students to work hard while developing friendships and enjoying their time in school. Parents value the support, care and commitment of staff, feeling that the children are well prepared for their movement to middle school. Parents comment that their children feel that the school is “an extension of their family”.

Effective partnerships extend the capacity of the school to deliver a broad and interesting curriculum. These include opportunities generated from environmental programs and community-based organizations which provide after-school tutoring. The school reaches out into the community by providing support for a Junior Achievement program in partnership with a local high school.

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 principal demonstrates a clear vision for continuously improving the school. She has a precise strategy for implementing change. It is based on incremental stages of development so that initiatives have time to become embedded. These incremental stages have included a focus on writing and reading, greater use of technology and implementation of a new science curriculum. These developments effectively include interim goals to evaluate progress but time frames need to be more clearly specified.

The principal meets with teachers to observe the impact of these strategies in the classroom and to relate them to student goals. Supportive interventions with students are monitored and revised regularly to ensure that the desired improvement in their skills is achieved. Teachers use ongoing assessments routinely to understand each student’s progress. The school recognizes the need to develop a common awareness of recent changes in standardized assessment procedures to achieve consistency of practice among teachers.

The principal and senior colleagues use their detailed knowledge of student performance to plan priorities for further improvement. The membership of the inquiry team is well placed to extend and formalize this capacity so that there is a focus on sustaining appropriate levels of challenge and maintaining the progress of all students.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Fresh Meadows (PS 173)	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.					
To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?			X		
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X		

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.					
To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area?				X	
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?			X		
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X	

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X	