



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Cambria Heights**

**Elementary School 176**

**120-45 235<sup>th</sup> Street  
Queens  
NY 11411**

**Principal: Arlene Bartlett**

**Dates of review: October 15-16, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Jo Cheadle-Maruta**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Cambria Heights is an elementary school with 623 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 96.4% Black, 2.2% Hispanic, 0.7% White and 0.7% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006–2007 was 97%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 74% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal provides outstanding leadership and ensures that the vision for the school's future is clearly understood.
- Staff members fully support and actively participate in realizing the principal's exceptionally clear vision for the school's future development.
- Staff place students' needs first and fully accept their accountability in ensuring that students do as well as they can.
- The school collects and analyzes data very efficiently to provide a very clear picture of how well it is doing.
- The school uses information provided by data very effectively to drive all decisions that lead towards reaching goals for improvement.
- High quality development plans provide a very strong foundation for the school's effective management.
- The school regularly and rigorously monitors and evaluates the progress it makes towards set goals.
- There is excellent collaboration and cooperation between members of staff ensuring consistency in the school's work.
- The school has a wonderfully supportive, respectful and purposeful culture, which encourages students' personal and academic growth.
- Students are genuinely happy, excitedly motivated and want to come to school, which means that attendance rates are good.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to build teachers' skills in carefully analyzing and confidently using ARIS, the new student data system.
- Ensure that students and parents are continually aware of the goals set for the immediate next steps in learning.
- Continue to improve the school's broad curriculum by enhancing teaching and learning in computer technology and the introduction of foreign language instruction.
- Increase the collection and use of information relating to students' social and personal contexts to plan effective individual instructional strategies.

## Part 3: Main findings

### **Progress made since the last review**

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

### **Overall Evaluation**

#### **This school is well developed.**

The principal of Cambria Heights school is determined that her students will be academically successful, socially responsible and personally happy. Her vision is to create a school built on the strongest foundations possible. She intends that such firm foundations will support the school regardless of changing contexts. With strong foundations, the school can provide continuous high quality education for students. The principal is remarkably adept at planning for development. She encourages the participation of all staff members to ensure the realization of this vision.

Because of the principal's exemplary management and leadership, the school staff is empowered, committed and hard working. They view their accountability to the students with seriousness. Parents are confident that the staff of the school respect and care for their children. They are happy that teachers continually challenge their children to do better. In turn, students have high levels of self-esteem and confidence. They believe that teachers want them to do as well as they can. They know that expectations of them are high in terms of their work and behavior. They say, "Teachers here never slack off." The school has identified that it needs to ensure students and parents are aware of student's goals and the "next-steps" they need to take to reach those goals. The school does not consistently collect and use information from parents about their students' learning contexts.

The work of the school's inquiry team exemplifies the continued excellent use of student data to plan strategically for development. The team has begun by establishing an agreed mission statement for their work. They have identified a focus group and begun discussing options for the organization of their work. The team is large and comprises of volunteer members of staff who want to play an active role in influencing student outcomes. The team has already made extremely good use of the data available to them. With this information, they have begun to plan actions that will have the most beneficial impact on student progress. The team works very cohesively despite its size. Individuals have very clear roles and responsibilities.

Since the last review, the school has made some progress in addressing areas for improvement. Enhanced resources are enabling students' greater access to computers in all classrooms.

### **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 outstanding.**

The school continues to collect and collate an impressive data set on student performance. The principal describes this work as “a moving image of each child”. The data comprises of a comprehensive breakdown of information pertaining to all school subgroups. It includes extremely detailed tracking for special education students and the school’s small group of English language learners. The school affords particularly close attention to the group of students who join at other times rather than in the kindergarten class. Teachers carry out very useful baseline assessments for these students. They compile ongoing information to ensure these students, who often begin at lower levels, make rapid rates of progress.

Members of staff have a very clear understanding of how ongoing assessment enables them to track students’ progress towards identified learning goals. School leaders very effectively measure success by tracking data by grades, subject areas and for particular classrooms. The school regularly and rigorously updates all student information to give a true picture of “where we are now”. The school’s goal is to have a five day turn around for the new student information gathered to reach all relevant parties and be used to direct instruction for the student. Teachers collect information in assessment binders that contain findings from standardized assessments, individual conferencing sessions and teacher assessments. These efforts lead to good and consistent progress of all student performance.

The school effectively compares its work with other similar schools, amending its own plans to make use of successful strategies employed by other establishments. Leaders plan to make more use of the recently established peer school group to monitor progress over time for similar sub-groups. There has also been a good start to measuring the success of subgroups in comparison with other schools. Plans are in place for staff training opportunities in the use of ARIS, a new data collection system.

**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.**

From a comprehensive set of extremely carefully analyzed data, the school is able to plan for improvement very effectively. In this aspect of the school’s work, there is a very high level of collaboration between staff. This ensures that all members of staff know about performance trends for individual students, subgroups and overall school achievement. They recognize fully that they have a role and responsibility in affecting trends positively. The school is highly adept at identifying groups of students who need the most support. The program for school on Saturday has increased the potential for these students to be more successful. The principal works very closely with parents to ensure that there is an agreed understanding of why additional support is essential to their child’s learning. Parents and students are very aware of long-term achievement goals. While most teachers set short-term goals, some students are not as aware of the immediate next steps for their learning. This means that they cannot always talk about what they need to do next to improve a particular piece of work. Similarly, parents are not able to support

their children at home to improve a particular aspect of learning. The school is focusing on the use of good conferencing in all classrooms to create a consistent approach to the sharing of short-term goals.

There are very high expectations of staff, parents and students to commit to every opportunity that supports learning. Staff members are very willing to give of their time and energy to ensure that the academic program matches needs exactly. The school is very conscious of all situations that may affect how well students learn. Through honest and open discussion with parents and a commitment to spending considerable time discussing individuals and their needs, contextual social, personal and emotional information is used to increasingly good effect to make sure that there is appropriate programming for every individual. The school is very aware of the need to work successfully with parents to fully understand a student's learning context and encourage good progress at all times.

**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 makes very wise choices regarding curriculum approaches to ensure that it caters for all learning styles and academic needs. An exciting range of extra-curricular activities motivates and inspires students. For example, students are very proud to participate in a highly successful student chorus. They are also enthusiastic about sporting activities and say that they would like more opportunities to play on school teams. There are clear plans in place to extend the school's curriculum further by continuing to improve resources and learning opportunities in technology. Improvement plans include the purchase of Smart boards and training in the effective use of computer aid technology as a tool to encourage good progress in all subjects. The school does not currently provide for learning in a foreign language. Meaningful discussions have begun however, relating to the introduction of modern foreign languages. Students and teachers recognize the great value that learning another language would provide.

The school uses a variety of different ways to group students and meet their individual needs. These include accelerated learning groups, collaborative teaching groups and a group for talented and gifted students. Effective organization results in appropriately leveled instruction for students. Teachers make increasingly good use of ongoing assessments to revise and amend instruction. School leaders closely monitor the differentiation of instruction in all classrooms which maintains consistency and accountability. School leaders make very good decisions regarding finances and the use of other resources to support effectively the realization of the school's development goals. Finances are used prudently to ensure that specialist teaching staff, for instance in physical education, are employed to develop student motivation and enthusiasm. Students' love of school encourages their good attendance, but leaders' diligence in monitoring attendance also sets the expectation very high. Additionally, leaders use their analysis of attendance for subgroups to highlight the impact that absences before or after a holiday and regular Monday and Friday absences have on student learning. In this way they encourage parents to support their children's progress through regular attendance.

**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 closely monitors and evaluates the quality of classroom instruction. She uses her observations, alongside student outcome data pertaining to individual teachers, to guide decisions about specific training needs. She provides teachers with clear feedback on expected standards and the need for necessary improvement. School leaders make wise decisions for staff training with the aim of supporting teachers to be the best that they can be. Leaders target professional development clearly at developing the skills of individual teachers to ensure consistently good standards of instruction. Teachers completely understand that the intended outcome for all training opportunities is to encourage whole school improvement. They say, "Our mission is clear and all decisions are made to reach our aims." They are also very complimentary of the chances they have to develop individual skills and knowledge. They recognize that the principal supports their personal professional development for the good of the whole school. Members of staff enjoy working at the school and are willing to learn from each other. While there are no formal arrangements for observing colleagues, sharing of good practice occurs regularly. There are structured systems for supporting new teachers involving mentoring sessions and opportunities to observe colleagues. New teachers commented that the well-established routines, good communication through a daily bulletin, clear procedures for staff and highly effective management of the school enabled them to make a smooth and productive start to their work.

**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.**

This aspect of the school's work is the main foundation for all other success. There is a very clear understanding of where the school is going and what it needs to do to support the journey. Development plans arise from statistical and practical evidence and show a clear understanding of where things need to improve. Plans have agreed timeframes and very clear criteria for measuring success. These plans include measurable percentage of students who will reach an indicated goal or get to an intended level. Plans are the result of an well-established and shared vision of what the school seeks to achieve for each student. In using data from assessments, teachers are becoming increasingly more confident and knowledgeable in contributing to discussions relating to the achievement of whole school goals. In tracking the progress made by special education students, for instance, teachers contribute evidence from a broad range of assessment tools. This enables school leaders to make strategic decisions about intervention strategies that have maximum impact. The school is highly reflective of its practice and leaders meet regularly to review the work at hand. They monitor progress towards whole school goals rigorously and critically. They revise plans effectively to ensure that whole school and individual progress is uninterrupted and continually moves upwards. The school's ability to judge its own success and plan to promote continued success is vital to the sustenance of high quality programming.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Cambria Heights (PS 176)</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				X	

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .</b>	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

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .</b>	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

**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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				<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.**

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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				<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.**

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