



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public School 224

Elementary-Middle School 224

**252-12 72nd Avenue
Queens
NY 11426**

Principal: Rose Tomaselli

Dates of review: November 28 - 29, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Louise Kapner

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 224 is an elementary-middle school with 390 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 36% Black, 22% Hispanic, 27% White, and 15% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 78% of the students enrolled and girls account for 22%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 90.9%.

Public School 224 is a 12 month school for students with developmental delays, emotional deficits, hearing impairments and those within the autistic spectrum. There are 45 classes in seven sites. Students attend in self-contained settings or inclusion classes and are integrated into mainstream classes with the support of paraprofessionals. Approximately 60% of the students are eligible for the New York State Alternate Assessments.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The leadership of the principal is outstanding and all members of the school community respect her very much.
- The assistant principals work as a highly collaborative team to support the successful development of teachers' instructional skills.
- Teachers of the autistic students collect, maintain and use highly varied and extensive data to provide students with an extremely individualized educational program.
- Professional development is differentiated and used extremely well to enhance teachers' skills.
- Students feel highly supported by their teachers and enjoy coming to school.
- The school has a very strong partnership with parents who are encouraged to provide a wealth of useful information about their child with school staff.
- The school is constantly revisiting its goals and revises practices to provide relevant instruction and create a supportive, safe environment for students.
- Highly effective partnerships provide many opportunities that enhance student and school programs.
- The school leaders are not complacent and are constantly planning for their future development to meet the needs of their students.
- Teachers make good contribution to the social and academic programs for fragile students.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a grading system for standardized assessment students to ensure consistency between classroom work and report card grades.
- Promote the use of teachers' written responses to students' work as and when appropriate to convey clear expectations.
- Provide transitioning students with opportunities to visit their new school to gain an in-depth understanding of their next steps in education.

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 224 is an exceedingly well managed school for students with a wide range of special needs. The principal, along with her very capable assistant principals and dedicated staff, work as a highly collaborative team to meet the needs of fragile students. The excellent collection of students' data, from a wide range of assessments and daily classroom activities, provides staff with a wealth of information. This is used very well to set individual goals in behavior and academics, and to monitor student performance and progress. Staff are very knowledgeable about best practices and they eagerly participate in professional development activities that will further enhance their skills. Students are actively engaged in learning and instruction is very well matched to individual needs. Teachers' grading and comments on students' work provides some guidance. However, this is not consistent on all work and is not congruent with report-card grading for standardized assessment students.

Each area noted for improvement during the 2006-2007 Quality Review has been addressed effectively. Although difficult to find comparable District 75 schools, the principal identified three schools with somewhat similar demographics. An increase in the inclusion program has enabled the school to provide opportunities for a greater number of students. The school's inquiry team is well underway and identified struggling 4th grade students are now receiving additional support. Although situated in seven sites the school prides itself on being a cohesive organization. Many students begin in pre-kindergarten and continue through middle school attending at different sites and in appropriate programs. While transitioning students may visit their new school, this is not a consistent practice. Administrators are in no way complacent and school practice is under constant review, and suitable changes are initiated as needed. There are clear, articulated future goals to improve student outcomes.

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 collection and use of data to identify students' needs is at a very high level. Teachers administer commercial and school-designed tools that are extremely well matched to each student's needs. This extensive information addresses both cognitive and behavioral needs of students, is maintained by teachers in individual student

binders, and is used very well to generate suitable goals on the individual education plan. Comprehensive profile sheets for standardized assessment students include a wide-range of standardized and school-generated data that enables the school to monitor performance and progress of students, classes and grades during the year and year-to-year. The school's review of data by gender and ethnic groups shows minimal differences in performance. Standardized results for English language learners emphasize the need to focus on language development.

Of particular note is the school's attention to the autistic students. The use of comprehensive assessment tools and collection of data is outstanding and highly effective in planning instruction, and monitoring the performance and progress of each student. Student binders include bi-annual results from an impressive range of assessment programs. This information is used extremely effectively to set suitable goals for the individual education plan and to plan daily instruction. The school's use this year of the School-wide information system to collect data on student behavior enables a careful monitoring of who, when, where, and types of occurrences. Although difficult to identify a peer group, the principal selected District 75 schools that are fairly similar. A detailed analysis compared students' results for grades 3 through 8.

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, specialists and paraprofessionals work as a highly collaborative team, in and out of the classroom, to address the learning needs of each student. Their extensive and extremely effective use of data guides daily academic instruction and addresses the developmental needs of each student. Highly individual measurable goals are reflected on the individual education plan and are continually revisited and up-dated as suitable. Classrooms reflect ongoing attention to students' needs with individual behavior plans and reinforcer inventories prominently displayed for all staffs' use. Learning tasks are highly differentiated, recognizing the functional level of each student. Academic intervention services are provided individually or in small groups for eligible students. Tasks are specific to skill and learning style to improve student outcomes.

Administrators, staff and parents representing all sites are very committed to creating a school that provides students with opportunities to grow socially and to reach their academic potential. A teacher shared that she tries to mirror a "family in the classroom". All constituents contribute to the Comprehensive Education Plan and are very knowledgeable of school's goals. Expectations are constantly shared with students. Class rules, behavior charts, and displayed work provide students with good guidance. Some work reflects teachers' responses; however, this is not consistent at each unit or site-to-site. Grades also are not always congruent with each student's functional level or with the report card. School expectations are clearly communicated to parents. An orientation is held on a Saturday in September, there are ongoing daily messages, and parents are provided with an abundance of workshops. Parents learn how to work with their child at home and as one parent said, "they teach us." Parents also have many opportunities to provide vital information about their child with school staff contributing to an atmosphere of trust and support. An input sheet is completed prior to parent conferences. A school-designed report card for autistic students, that is translated and

distributed twice yearly, not only provides a wealth of information as to each student's skill development, but also has ample space for parents to share their own observations about their child.

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's curriculum reflects careful consideration of students' needs. Structured instructional programs in all areas align with State standards and provide meaningful data to guide instruction. Streaming for reading and math supports a high degree of differentiated instruction for standardized assessment students. Best practices from a variety of programs ensure that instruction is rigorous and highly suitable for the most fragile students. Staff for the hearing-impaired students use instructional approaches and materials that are exceptionally appropriate for their students. Meyer Johnson picture symbols and Picture Exchange Communicate System are highly effective for non-verbal students. Methodology tailored for autistic students create classrooms that encourage smooth transitions from workstation to workstation where students work independently. Data from a number of assessments is exceedingly specific and used to follow students' mastery and to guide instruction. Assistive technology successfully involves students in their learning. A school-developed functional curriculum supports students becoming independent. Technology is used very well to engage students in their learning. The instructional technology team regularly meets to explore ways in which instruction can be further enhanced. Personal growth of students is also afforded a high priority. The school-wide "Power of Choice" program encourages students to grow socially. The school makes excellent use of funds to support the arts. Students are involved in many activities that focus on art and music, and are learning about, and involved in, writing poetry by working with "Teachers' Writers' Collaboration"..

Teachers are held highly accountable. Classrooms are safe environments and instruction is reflective of all students' needs. During frequent learning walks administrators review student data and students' goals to ensure suitable instruction is taking place. A pacing calendar provides appropriate timeframes for submission of required administrative mandates. Students enjoy coming to school and participating in various activities. Attendance has been above 90% over the past few years and is presently at 92% albeit many students are young and medically fragile. Absences trigger immediate follow up.

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 and assistant principals are outstanding leaders and manage the school extremely effectively. Their regular cabinet meetings are augmented by daily communication. Their expertise is used well to ensure that classroom instruction and environment is of a high quality and well matched to students' needs. Procedures are

clearly articulated to staff via a school handbook, school- and site-specific daily memos, and the use of email. Formal observations are focused and teachers are actively engaged in the feedback process, including conversations about students' learning styles and needs. Some teachers are involved in the alternatives to the formal observation, which includes setting personal goals and submitting an end product to reflect their work. Teachers share common preps and have many opportunities for intra- and inter-site visitations to share best practices. Unit coordinators provide direct hands-on help. Professional development opportunities are extensive and well differentiated, based upon teachers' needs and assignments. Staff participate in site-based activities offered by colleagues and staff from outside agencies, and attend Department of Education trainings. Presently, one of the school's crisis teachers is helping with the school-wide implementation of the behavior modification "Power of Choice" program. New teachers are assigned mentors and a buddy system is used as needed for other staff. As appropriate, inter-site movement of staff is effected to support the instructional program.

Student support providers attend to students' needs very well. The inter-disciplinary team meets monthly and is keen on identifying those students needing more or less restrictive environments. Some students have opportunities to visit other sites prior to transitioning; however, this is not consistent. Extremely effective partnerships further the school's goals. Student teachers from Hofstra become appointed staff as positions become available. Children from the Bayside Y and students from the pre-kindergarten autistic unit visit each other and work side-by-side in learning activities.

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 highly focused on improving student outcomes. Measurable short- and long-term goals are set for each student. Progress is regularly monitored through collection of data from daily work, periodic assessment results, results from school-generated assessments, and ongoing review of individual student assessment binders. Instructional practices by all staff are under constant review. Good teaching is regularly monitored relative to students' goals and student outcomes. Students are regrouped for instruction as needed. Results from assessments also drive revisiting present school practices and making suitable changes. Streaming students in reading is a direct outgrowth of reviewing results on the English language arts test. Student results also supported the implementation of new curriculum in literacy and phonics for autistic students.

The principal is very proud that although Public School 224 is a complex organization across seven sites, the school is one cohesive unit with uniformity to the extent possible. Highly focused future goals include expanding the functional curriculum, professional development for staff in working with autistic students, and focusing on standardized assessment students to improve their outcomes. The school wants to build on past successes and expand their capacity to meet each student's need.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| SCHOOL NAME: Public School 224 | 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 | |