



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Crotona Park West School

Elementary - Middle School 004

1701 Fulton Avenue

Bronx

NY 10457

Principal: Vincent Resto

Dates of review: April 7 - 8, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Ronnie Solow

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Crotona Park West School is an elementary school - middle school with 529 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 43% Black, 55% Hispanic, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 19% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 88%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 92% eligibility.

The principal is just completing his first year, after serving two years as the assistant principal. The school building was constructed in 1896 and many of the students are bussed to the school from other overcrowded schools all over the Bronx.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and administrative team provides collaborative leadership and effectively articulates the vision and mission of the school.
- The school analyzes a wide range of data which it uses to understand the learning needs of the students.
- Students and teachers engage in collaborative data examination sessions to set learning goals and establish steps to attain them.
- Students and parents greatly appreciate the efforts of the staff to provide a high quality, engaging education.
- The arts and outside partnerships support and enhance the academic, social and emotional development of the students.
- Academic intervention and instructional support services effectively address student needs based on data.
- The extensive professional development program, differentiated by skill, need and interest, increases teacher growth and development.
- Differentiated instruction, detailed curriculum maps and pacing calendars, and positive behavioral expectations, result in academic growth and progress.
- Rules, regulations and procedures, well known and followed, enable the school to run smoothly and deal effectively with behavioral incidents.
- Creative use of the budget provides ample books, materials and teacher support to improve student learning outcomes.

What the school needs to improve

- Track data for students and groups as they move through the grades to determine progress towards closing the achievement gaps between groups.
- Systematically compare the school's performance with similar schools to learn and share strategies that improve achievement outcomes.
- Share interim and predictive testing information with parents to keep them well informed about the progress and goals of their children.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The principal has galvanized the staff into an inclusive, collaborative team, inviting all staff members to participate in moving the school forward by “doing the work together.” Programs and structures that are in place emphasize high expectations within a culture that all students can and will achieve well. Teachers and students have a good understanding of the use of data and the ways its use reveals the steps for learning. Teachers use formative, summative and informal classroom data sources for differentiating instruction and providing high quality, engaging lessons. The systematic, focused professional development program assists the teachers with raising their comfort levels with using data for instruction and is an ongoing feature of the school’s work in its drive to improve student achievement outcomes. Currently the school does not conduct longitudinal studies to track the progress of student groups as they move through the grades to assess growth and the narrowing of the existing performance gaps. Nor does it make comparisons with similar schools to replicate best practices that provide good achievement outcomes.

Parents and students feel welcomed and supported by the school. They especially appreciate all of the new efforts and programs instituted this year. Parents feel well informed and in touch with their children’s academic performance and needs. The school is aware of the power that sharing interim and predictive testing results can have in providing parents with additional information regarding the performance, progress and goals of their children.

Extensive, ongoing professional development in data gathering, analysis and usage supports teachers’ development of best practices. Sharing these best practices takes place in a variety of ways. Teachers systematically update their data binders, which the administration review regularly. Students’ assessment folders house informal and formal data and goal templates. School-wide attendance, a focus of this year’s plans, has improved due to the concentrated effort by all staff members.

The inquiry team is studying thirty grade 6 students who showed a drop of 30+ points on the grade 5 State English language arts exam. Thus far, their interventions, measured by predictive and interim exam results, show some gains in reading prowess.

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 gathers a variety of formal and informal data and uses its own assessments to understand the performance and progress of its students. The data analysis for gender, ethnicity, special education students and English language learners provides the teachers with an accurate assessment of progress for each student, class and group in the school. The gathered information serves as the basis for forming flexible, needs-based instructional groups that effectively address student needs. The large populations of special education students and English language learners receive high quality, targeted instruction based on the data findings, through a variety of programs and strategies that effectively address individual needs.

The teachers consistently use information from data to raise student performance levels. Outcomes of predictive and interim assessments result in targeted, professional development so well planned interventions can occur. The data specialist, Teacher Center staff developer, coaches, lead teachers and assistant principals assist the teachers in comparing classroom findings with other data sources in order to address the next stages of learning actively.

Currently, the school does not track the performance and progress of ethnic groups as they move through the grades, to assess academic growth and determine whether the educational program addresses the performance gaps that currently exist between groups. The principal does not make comparisons with similar schools in his peer horizon, network or neighborhood, thereby limiting his ability to adopt best practices and expand his decision-making capacity.

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.

Good collaborative processes across the school assist the principal and the various teams with goal setting and school improvement. Weekly grade team planning periods and monthly professional development activities effectively assist teachers in developing appropriate lessons and materials for their classes. School-based and consultant support personnel in every subject area collaborate with teachers in planning lessons well aligned to the excellent, detailed curriculum maps and pacing calendars. The teachers effectively plan for student improvement by involving the use of the many available data sources. Self-evaluation and reflection by the students occurs through a school-wide initiative called "data driven instructional Fridays". Students and their teachers examine class and individual data, use the information for setting class and individual progress goals, and analyze their movement towards goal attainment, all of which results in increased student accountability for their own progress.

English language learners, special education students and students at risk of failure receive excellent intervention services. Targeted instruction, in small group, individual, pull-out or push-in models, addresses the individual needs of the students. Data analysis provides the basis for the systematic reconfiguring of groups and strategies for the students.

Parents regularly receive information about their children through formal and informal channels. In addition to report cards and mid-cycle progress reports, parents are notified of progress through telephone calls, the automated messenger and notes from teachers. At this time, the school does not share the predictive and interim testing results with parents to keep them better informed of their child's progress, strengths and areas of need.

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 core curriculum follows State and City mandates. All classes effectively incorporate the workshop model with flexible instructional groups, differentiated learning activities conferencing and goal setting sessions. The broad, engaging curriculum, supplemented by art, music, drama, physical education and technology instruction, effectively supports learning. Teacher accountability, assessed through classroom observations and student satisfaction surveys, notes a supportive and nurturing environment in which students are happy to attend. Students report, "Our teachers make sure we understand." "We can always get help from our teachers." Teachers and students engage in collaborative goal-setting conferences resulting in students' ability to articulate and explain personal learning goals and ways to achieve the goals.

Wise budget, staffing and hiring decisions, based on data, target the needs of the students. The scrutiny resulted in the hiring of additional teachers to lower class size, two early intervention teachers, materials for after school and holiday programs, and numerous enrichment activities. An intensive grant writing effort resulted in the good artist in residence program. Attendance, currently at 91%, is a major focus of the school's action plans. The good systems and measures put in place by the principal are resulting in a 3% increase over last year. Guidance counselors, deans, a social worker and family worker provide effective services to support of student growth and development. The student council presents information pertinent to students in their classrooms, initiated "spirit week" and fundraising drives.

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 visit classes daily and provide effective formal and informal feedback on a quick turnaround schedule. Intervisitations between classes, supported and well designed, provide excellent opportunities for sharing best practices, discussion and reflection, leading to better instruction. Teachers College training, a

Writing Matters consultant, and the Teacher Center staff developer effectively assist teachers through modeling, demonstration lessons, and other best practices. The professional development program is successfully and explicitly tailored to meet the varying needs, skills and interest levels of the teachers. Professional development surveys, distributed several times per year, indicate areas of concern and provide the foundation for the in-school training sessions. Teachers regularly attend City, State, network and other conferences, sharing the information gathered at these sessions. The new teacher induction program is highly tailored to staff needs. Coaches, mentors, and buddy teachers effectively support new staff members. Once a week, a new teacher workshop meets and addresses issues specific to new teachers. One new teacher reported, "We often stay well past our allotted time due to the information and support we get at these meetings."

Clear procedures, outlined in handbooks, provide guidelines for positive school-wide behavior and consequences for infractions. Class rules, prominently posted in all classrooms, utilize positive wording. The student government communicates and addresses quality of life issues with the principal. These measures result in the school running smoothly and efficiently.

Partnerships support the academic and social needs of the students well. After school, Saturday and holiday week activities provide many extra- and co-curricular experiences. A 21st Century Grant provides leadership training, art, dance, theater and music experiences.

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.

Through the lens of the principal's eye, all plans include measurable and regularly scheduled reviews of targets, benchmarks and timeframes in order to assess progress towards achieving the goals. Good systems, now in place, provide ongoing monitoring and evaluations towards achieving the outlined goals in the principal's, assistant principals' and individual teachers' goal-setting processes. An on-going, cyclical review of school, grade, class and individual student data, serves as a strategic measure of school development. This review includes all constituent groups in the school community, resulting in greater accountability and buy-in for all groups.

Grade, subject teams, the curriculum committee and cabinet, meet regularly to examine performance outcomes and determine next steps and actions. Appropriate, timely revisions to curriculum maps and pacing calendars build upon the review of progress. Marking cycles, testing periods and end of year planning delineate the areas for further development through goal setting and action planning for the coming year well. The new plan effectively builds upon the positive outcomes and strategically addresses the needs through targeted planning and scrutiny.

The principal and school community have a clear, unified vision for their school. Their strategic plan includes defined steps for providing appropriate support and services for every student to reach their full potential through a high quality, engaging 21st century education.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Crotona Park West School	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 rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area?				X	
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
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 and tardiness?				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, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
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 makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					X

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped