



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The School of Higher Expectations**

**Elementary School 066**

**1001 Jennings Street  
Bronx  
NY 10460**

**Principal: Thomas DeGrazia**

**Dates of review: May 22-23, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Debra Spivak**

## Content of the report

### **Part 1: The School Context**

Information about the school

### **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well  
What the school needs to improve

### **Part 3: Main Findings**

Progress made since the last review  
Overall evaluation  
How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

### **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The School for Higher Expectations is an elementary school with 588 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 22.9% Black, 76.4% Hispanic, 0.34% White, and 0.2% Asian students. The student body includes 25.3% English language learners and 17.3% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 90.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 92% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school provides excellent support to new teachers through its New Teacher Academy.
- An environment of mutual trust and respect exists among staff, students and parents/caregivers.
- The principal has a clear vision for the future development of the school.
- Teachers gather and update data on a consistent basis.
- The school provides a broad and engaging curriculum that includes various sports-related and artistic elements to enhance student learning.
- School leaders and faculty convey consistently high expectations to students and their caregivers.
- School leaders use available data to make strategic decisions.
- The school has an active attendance team that has brought about an increase in school-wide attendance.
- Teachers and parents/caregivers communicate regularly to support student learning.

### What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the analysis of data relating to the progress and performance of ethnic and gender groups.
- Measure the school's performance and progress in comparison to similar schools.
- Explore possible collaborations with outside entities to enrich the curriculum.
- Improve the practice of differentiation of instruction schoolwide.
- Implement effective short and long-term strategic planning, including objectively measurable, interim measures of success with agreed timeframes to assess the impact of plans and interventions.

## 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.**

Although new to the school, the experience of the principal in educational leadership is quite evident. In his first few months as the leader of this school, parents, teachers and students have commented about the cultural shift that has begun. The principal is dedicated to ensuring that each child receives a well-rounded education in a safe and nurturing environment. To that end, the school provides students with artistic and sports-oriented enrichment as well as core subject area instruction. The focus on student attendance and citizenship has had a positive impact on the school climate.

School leaders expressed the desire to hire staff members who exhibit a commitment to children and education. In turn, school leaders are committed to offering all teachers the support needed to improve their craft. The creation of the New Teacher Academy has offered the seventeen new teachers the opportunity to learn and grow together. This professional development has extended to tenured teachers as well who voiced a desire for similar workshops.

Academic success is paramount and it is clear that parents and students recognize that the school has high expectations for all. The leadership has similar expectations for itself and works to ensure that the instructional program enables all students to succeed. Although the school has not defined interim or long-term goals, other than the goals of improving student achievement in English language arts, math and attendance, it uses the information at hand to make decisions to support these generic goals. The work of the inquiry team, which has thoughtfully examined the progress of English language learners, has not yet been shared throughout the school.

The new principal has worked to address most issues in the previous Quality Review report. The school has focused much of the school-wide professional development on the use of data to inform and improve instructional practice. Almost all classes exhibit basic elements of differentiation and the school continues to refine this practice.

## **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.**

Every teacher has collected data throughout the year in a clear, concise manner. The student assessment monitoring system (SAMS) and a form that shows students' need for, or receipt of, additional services are systematically used throughout the school. Progress is charted in binders and parents commented on how they have a wealth of information regarding their children's achievement, progress and next steps as a result of the open lines of communication which exist.

As a consequence of the review of qualitative and quantitative information, decisions were made to lower class size on several grades and review the delivery of special education and English as a Second Language services throughout the course of the school year. Three additional classes were opened this winter, new teachers were hired, and staff assignments were tailored to meet the needs of the student body, especially for English language learners and students with special needs.

Despite years of an achievement gap within the school, the school has recently started analyzing data to understand the variation in the performance among ethnicities and genders. School leaders expressed that a next step for school staff is to study these trends in depth as well as performance and progress trends based on comparisons with similar schools.

**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.**

School leaders and faculty have worked together to establish annual, measurable goals that drive its work. The school's data inquiry team gathers information on the English language learners involved in its research study from a variety of sources. The data specialist chairs the meetings and input is received from all relevant staff members so that appropriate decisions can be made. The teams' work is beginning to have an impact on the progress of the target group and the findings have important implications. However, the dissemination of the team's findings has yet to be shared widely. The principal is planning an extension of the inquiry team's work as the cabinet looks more carefully at the service delivery models for English language learners.

A school motto is "at CS 66, I expect the BEST from myself." This expectation is displayed throughout the building. It is clear that all community members are expected to set excellent examples in behavior, excellence, safety, and trust which in turn set the tone school wide. Parents and students expressed that all staff members have high expectations and there is an open channel of communication between the school and the home. Several parents expressed comfort in having the cell phone numbers of teachers so that they can contact teachers at a mutually convenient time, which does not

always coincide with the official hours of the school day. Parents are well aware of their child's strengths, weaknesses, and next steps. The principal has also created a brief customer service survey and has an "open door policy" which allows parents to voice opinions on a consistent basis.

**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.**

Teachers are held accountable for their students' progress through discussion, formal and informal observations and data analysis. While teacher input is requested when making assignments, all final determinations are based on evidence of success in that placement. Mid-year adjustments were not uncommon this year, particularly for English language learners and special education students, in an effort to ensure that students were given the greatest opportunity to succeed. Students are afforded the opportunity to work with teachers and support staff in small groups throughout the day. While small group work is evident, the differentiation of instruction to students in terms of process, content and product is not as consistently evident school-wide.

The principal utilizes the budget to capitalize on the desire to offer a rigorous academic instruction with reduced class size on the lower grades and to offer extra-curricular activities to all students after school hours each Thursday and on Friday afternoon. Activities include soccer, dance, cheerleading, yoga, ballroom dancing, and chorus, to name a few.

Parents, teachers and students concur that the school is safe, calm and inviting. Children reap the benefits as they receive DeGrazia dollars for exhibiting positive behavior throughout the school that they can use as payment at the school's BestBuy store which is open at appointed times during the day. Several children have realized the benefits of capitalism and have saved their dollars over the course of the year to buy items such as a scooter, CD player, iPod, or a donated computer instead of stickers, puzzles, and sports equipment.

**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 formation of the New Teachers Academy, as well as the Acuity Academy, where teachers are mentored in the use and analysis of data to create focused lessons, are a direct result of analyzing qualitative and quantitative data. Teachers offered feedback on their desires with regard to the focus of professional development sessions and these academies were born. New and tenured staff are afforded the opportunity to learn instructional strategies, ways to analyze data and group students, and methods to integrate English as a second language strategies into lessons from fellow teachers, paid consultants, and teachers from other schools. The formation of LAB sites within the school came about as a direct result of teacher suggestions. Intervisitations to schools

utilizing similar curricula have afforded teachers the opportunity to see best practices elsewhere as well. Staff are also given opportunities to meet regularly to review achievements and plan together.

The school has a high rate of student mobility and, as such, has instituted registration procedures that optimize the child's experiences in the school from the very first day. Upon registration, each child is welcomed by the school secretary, a member of the academic intervention services team, the guidance counsellor and coach. Each assesses the needs of the incoming student so that the child can receive whatever supports are necessary to immediately realize academic success.

Several school collaborations with community-based organizations were put on hold this year as the school leadership sensibly evaluated their impact on the school. The school has expressed interest in exploring possible collaborations with outside entities in the upcoming school year based on a detailed analysis of need.

**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 proficient.**

Since the last review, the school has made limited progress in setting interim goals that would enable both the school and teachers to track progress more accurately. The school has not formally written its interim goals for each and every student, or groups within the school, and the administration plans to further work in this area in the near future.

It is, however, evident that the school leadership is ready and willing to make modifications to students' and teachers' programs based on data in order to ensure that every student can be successful. The use of the Student Assessment Monitoring System (SAMS) is one step towards utilizing information in a timely manner to monitor progress and revise individual plans immediately. Additional work in the area of the aligning assessments and noted benchmarks is a focus for next year as well.

The principal and his cabinet have a clear vision for the school which was echoed by parents, teachers, and students. The creation of a collaborative school community where everyone expects the best, and a sanctuary centered on mutual respect has begun. The school's name appropriately captures its vision.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The School of Higher Expectations</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				X	

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.**

<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	

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

<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</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.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?					X
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, 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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to 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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					X

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>