



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Isaac Clason School

Elementary School 100X

**800 Taylor Avenue
Bronx
NY 10473**

Principal: Chad Altman

**Dates of review: June 3- 4, 2008
Lead Reviewer: Sumita Kaufhold**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Isaac Clason School is an elementary school with 773 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 44% Black, 54% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 11% 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 92%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 75.1% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides dynamic, collaborative, committed and proactive leadership so that there is a clear vision for future development of the school.
- The principal knows his students well, has an open-door policy and has a high profile around the school which leads to a positive atmosphere for learning.
- The school has good knowledge of the progress of English language learners and ensures they receive the support they need to succeed.
- The principal and assistant principals model consistently the tone they expect in school and share high expectations for student achievement and progress.
- The principal uses the budget expertly to support school goals.
- Teachers work with high levels of collaboration to set student goals and plan instruction.
- There are good procedures for monitoring absence that have encouraged improving rates of attendance.
- The school provides many opportunities for teachers to learn from one another and empowers teachers to take the lead in modelling good practice.

What the school needs to improve

- Make effective use of data to plan interventions that effectively support students at most risk, and to track progress made by special education students.
- Promote the use of differentiated instruction to ensure all students are actively engaged in learning opportunities that meet their academic needs.
- Pursue strategies to further engage parents in the sustaining the development of their child's progress.
- Explore additional enrichment options for students to enhance their academic and social development.
- Strengthen the school's support services to collaborate in developing a systematic and consistent policy for addressing discipline.

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.

Isaac Clason School is led by a dynamic and committed leadership. The principal has a clear vision for the future development of the school. He knows his students well and has an open door policy for his teachers, students and parents. The high degree of mutual respect between teachers and students leads to a positive school atmosphere. The principal and assistant principals model consistently the tone they expect in school and their high expectations for student achievement and progress. The school works hard to encourage parental involvement, but leaders recognize the need to widen the opportunities for engaging parents in supporting their children's learning more effectively. There is also room for improvement in teachers' use of data to plan for differentiated instruction, and create lessons that are engaging and motivating for all students. Additionally, the school does not yet make full use of data to track the progress of special education students and make comparisons with other schools.

The school's inquiry team focus is in reading comprehension and vocabulary development, targeting underachieving students in grade 4. The students were selected as a result of the state exam results. Each target population student has an individualized intervention plan. The majority of the target population has shown improvement in reading comprehension skills and vocabulary development in tests later administered. This good practice is encouraging the school to improve intervention strategies and secure positive support for those students in most need of development. The school is currently also considering ways to establish well-organized and consistent procedures to manage student behavior and avoid disruptions to learning in classrooms.

Since the last Quality review, the school has made progress by developing a social studies program for grades kindergarten through 3 and programs specifically for grade 3, 4 and 5. The school has purchased nonfiction texts for all grades in science and social studies. They have further developed their shared reading program with purchase of additional big books. The school has placed two computers and a printer in all early childhood classes. Computers, printers and listening centers have also been purchased for the upper-grade classrooms. The school is in the process of opening a balanced literacy professional development center for all teachers. The curriculum has improved positively through this work, but there is still a need to build on enrichment activities to encourage all students to engage fully and feel motivated to learn.

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 has made good progress in analyzing data from the State and City assessment results to monitor the performance and progress of individual students, by ethnicity and gender. This analysis showed that girls were outperforming the boys in English language arts, and that a larger percentage of Black students were in Levels 3 and 4 than Hispanic students. Classroom teachers have data binders in English language arts and math, which contain information of students' interim assessment results, teacher generated assessment results, running records, conferencing notes, student work samples, and flexible grouping charts. Teachers regularly review students' work during grade conferences and child-study team meetings to monitor their progress. The school has a good understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners. However, tracking the progress of special education students is not yet as strong. The school needs to pay greater attention and consistently monitor the performance and progress of the special education students in all grades. The school does not formally compare its performance and progress 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.

Teachers engage in collaborative processes through common planning and grade meetings to establish overall classroom instructional goals and develop plans for meeting these targets. Teachers communicate to students these overall instructional goals. However, careful analysis by the administration needs to occur to support teachers in setting interim goals and to monitor progress towards meeting the goals, particularly for those students who need most support to improve. Students, with the assistance of their teachers, set personal goals in reading, writing and mathematics. . The school has an effective academic intervention program, with push-in and pullout services in math and English language arts. Specialist teachers carefully monitor student progress and focus on slippage of students between Levels 3 to 2, and 4 to 3. Though the school has effective systems in place for identifying students Level 1, and for students who need additional academic support for academic intervention services, it needs to strengthen further its systems of support for special education students.

The school communicates effectively to the whole community its high expectations for student performance and its school goal of being "partners in excellence". The school provides relevant information to parents on student progress particularly for the students in academic intervention services. However, the school needs to make greater efforts to inform, all parents of individual student goals, progress and how they improve.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is well-developed.

The school has begun to incorporate the balanced literacy approach across all grades as their core curriculum in their English language arts program. Extensive support is given to this effort through professional development and by creating a balanced literacy center for all teachers. However, the school does not pay close enough attention to engaging students in learning. While some teachers provide instruction well matched to students' needs, lessons are not always interesting, differentiated sufficiently or do not include well-varied approaches to teaching to accommodate learning styles and students' needs. Teachers require extra support and professional development in differentiating instruction to meet the specific needs of all their students. The school has added to its early childhood program by establishing an early childhood center off-site at the nearby middle school. This collaboration between the middle school and Isaac Clason has led to an initiative where middle school students on select dates visit the early childhood classes to support the early childhood students in their reading.

The school has an orderly and respectful learning environment that supports students' learning. There is a strong climate of mutual respect between all staff, students and parents. The hallways are full of stimulating and attractive displays of student work. The administration makes well-judged decisions on budgeting. Attendance is carefully monitored and good attendance is rewarded.

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 proficient.

The school, under the leadership of the new principal, has started the practice of learning walks. The learning walks are collaborative intervisitations between grades. These visitations are organized around a topic of study to support staff needs. Common planning occurs at grade level meetings, frequently including the cluster teachers so that they are part of the planning. Assistant principals observe classrooms informally frequently; and formal classroom observations are conducted once a year for tenured teachers, twice a year for non tenured teachers, where they give constructive feedback to improve teacher practice. New teachers are supported by being assigned a mentor and have the support of the grade leader to assist in planning and to meet their instructional goals. The professional development plan is designed to meet the needs of staff members and based upon teacher survey results and student outcomes. These professional development activities do not yet fully build teachers' capacity to differentiate instruction.

The school does not have systematic plan that address some of the discipline issues in order for learning to occur without interruption. There is a need to pursue strategies and professional development on positive behavior and classroom management in order to address some of the disciplines issues. Guidance services and school support services are not structured and aligned to provide effective prevention, intervention strategies and

support for students in need. There are effective collaborations with partners such as New York Junior Tennis League and Studio in a School that develop students' academic and personal skills. However, there is room for improvement in the exploration of additional opportunities, both within its own programming and with outside resources, to expand enrichment opportunities for students.

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.

Teachers use periodic assessments and diagnostics tools such as Acuity, ECLAS, WRAP, and DRA to monitor student progress and adjust their flexible grouping. The school is reviewing the periodic assessment and diagnostic data to review the progress and effectiveness of their intervention program for their students in academic intervention services in English language arts and math. However, school leaders need to provide further support to teachers to set interim goals with suitable timeframes for objectively measuring the set goals in order to improve individual student outcomes, particularly in the special education classrooms.

The principal has a clear vision for the future development of the school. Under his leadership, the school is a collaborative and dedicated community that fosters a respectful and is a conducive environment for learning for all students. After reviewing the school data, he has created one year, three year and five-year plans for school improvement. To meet the targets in the plan he has implemented procedures and systems towards effectuating change to improve student outcomes. The school is on a clear path of improvement as it strives to provide quality education for all its students.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Isaac Clason 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