



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Parkchester School

Elementary School 106

**2120 St. Raymond Avenue
Bronx
NY 10462**

Principal: Eugenia Montalvo

Dates of review: October 16 - 17, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Cheryl Baker

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Parkchester School is an elementary school with 1249 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 35% Black, 40% Hispanic, 1% White, and 20% Asian students. The student body includes 24% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 92%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 78% eligibility.

The school added a pre-kindergarten component and five grade 5 classrooms this year, resulting in increased staffing to accommodate 250 more students than it served the previous school year.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a good understanding of the progress of the school over time and its progress as compared to that of similar schools.
- The school provides a safe and orderly environment for learning.
- Students enjoy trusting and respectful relationships with their teachers and administrators.
- The core curriculum is well aligned from grade to grade and provides useful data to help teachers understand their students' progress.
- The coach and staff developer provide useful assistance to teachers in implementing the English and math curriculum.
- The school has a network of intervention practices providers that offer good assistance for students in need of additional support for their development and learning.
- The school has communicated clear expectations for student attendance that are supported by effective tracking systems.
- Goals for annual grade level improvement are well defined.

What the school needs to improve

- Engage all members of the school community in devising a strategic plan for improving the progress of the school that includes well understood goals, actions, timelines and incremental measures of success.
- Extend analysis of student achievement data to include the performance of all subgroups and other categories of interest.
- Increase the regularity and specificity of the focus of classroom observations to support the continued development of all staff, including those who have prior teaching experience.
- Continue to put structures and practices in place to ensure that teachers use all available data to plan instruction that is sufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of each child.
- Continue efforts to provide curricular and extracurricular enrichment opportunities to broaden students' exposure to engaging and challenging disciplines.
- Continue to build practices that develop communication among and between the school and parents.

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 proficient.

Since the last Quality Review the school has instituted common expectations for gathering student data and has provided teachers with good information about their students' achievement. Teachers now set targets for improving student achievement. Other recommendations have yet to be thoroughly addressed.

The school has a good general focus on the need to use State and teacher-generated data. Training in the optimal use of data is a goal as is greater understanding of and focus on the relative progress of all subgroups. At each grade level and for specially targeted groups, planning and goal setting are effective. Whole school improvement, though, lacks support from clear plans that are widely understood and embraced. The core curriculum is effective but limited in its breadth. Instruction is generally effective but not widely differentiated, though expectations for the use of data in planning have increased. The school is diligent in its effort to address the needs of each child through high-quality support from teachers, administrators and student support services. The school endeavors to provide teachers with necessary professional development and supervisory support within a limited amount of time available.

The school has formed an inquiry team and has identified its target group. The team meets regularly and is poised to begin to utilize the experience to inform their 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 proficient.

The school is effective in gathering data regarding the performance of students, classrooms, subject areas and grade levels. Results of state tests, classroom assessments, portfolios and data binders are used well to depict the overall progress of students at all these levels. The principal, who has led the school for more than a decade, has a good understanding of the school's progress over time and compares her school's progress to that of schools of similar size with similar populations. The school also uses reports of adequate yearly progress to understand its performance over time, particularly in math and English language arts.

This year, each teacher received a data binder at the start of the school year. These binders contain information about student achievement, academic supports and other data to assist teachers in developing an understanding of each student's individual needs. Teachers are expected to supplement this data over the course of the year with evidence of student work and records of performance to provide additional information about each student.

The progress and performance of special education students is informed and monitored by the actions and assessment criteria in their individual education plans. The school employs specialists and creates varied educational settings to address these students' needs. Similarly, the performance of English language learners is measured regularly to determine their progress in attaining proficiency in the use of the English language. Increasingly, State tests are providing information about these students' progress in the general curriculum.

The school is aware of the progress of ethnicities and has had some success in closing the achievement gap. However, there are opportunities for deeper investigation into ethnic and gender data that may provide useful insight. There have been some efforts to support teachers in the use of data, such as professional development on the use of Princeton Review results and some assistance in using math test scores. The school identifies the development of training, management systems and structures to help teachers to use data as an ongoing need.

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 proficient.

The school's Comprehensive Education Plan, cited as its guiding document, does not include current goals for the school's academic achievement, and the collaborative structures necessary to keep it up to date are not currently in place. The goals of the Comprehensive Education Plan have not typically been shared widely with all members of the school community. The current need to address some decline in performance on State tests has been communicated by administrators and is understood by teachers and some parents. However, specific plans accompanied by demanding measurable goals and timelines for reaching them have not been formalized to address these needs.

The school provides good focus on improving students' achievement. Specific classrooms, grade levels and subjects are identified as focus areas. Grade level expectations have been developed to provide structure and expectations for continuity of instruction between classrooms. Data binders and the collection and analysis of student work samples support greater focus on achievement in the tested subjects. Interventions are planned to address students' academic needs based on the analysis of student performance data and provide good assistance to move students forward. Those in greatest need of improvement are well supported through very specialized instruction and programs based on their special learning needs or language acquisition needs.

Expectations for student achievement are expressed in the school's mission and excellence is recognized through the honor roll. Some students set goals for their own improvement, but this is not a formalized practice. Communications to parents address student's performance in class and efforts are underway to provide monthly progress

reports at some grade levels. Monthly calendars and regularly scheduled workshops include suggestions for helping children to achieve and stress the importance of academics. Parents feel welcome in the school and feel that their concerns and questions are generally addressed. It is not the norm for parents to be asked to provide information to teachers or to the school regarding their children's learning needs. While the school has increased its capacity to provide translations and the scope of its outreach to homes, the level of parent participation is still a concern.

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 proficient.

The school's curriculum in math and English language arts is well articulated from grade to grade and provides regular assessments of student learning. An increased focus on the use of this interim data is seen in teachers' binders which include records of students' scores on unit tests, broken down by topic. The curriculum provides students with learning experiences in the tested areas and is supplemented by art and music classes during alternate years. There are limited opportunities for enrichment within the school day and after school activities are focused on remediation and test preparation rather than providing broad and engaging enhancements to students' learning.

The frequent monitoring of classrooms has increased accountability for gathering and organizing data on student performance and for creating supportive and inclusive learning environments. Less focus is placed on making instruction compelling and interesting. Administrators check for up-to-date records, evidence of the collection of student work and may look at plan books if available. There is less formal accountability for using the available data to differentiate instruction and make lessons compelling and interesting for students. Lessons are largely focused on whole class instruction with some opportunities for sharing and practice. Students and teachers demonstrate respectful and trusting relationships with one another. Students feel well cared for and supported by the school and its principal. They like coming to school and attendance rates continue to increase with the communication of expectations to students and their parents. The school employs good procedures to monitor student attendance.

The principal makes decisions regarding the budget, staffing and scheduling based on the available data. The recent increase in the number of students at the school, a result of the addition of two additional grades, informed increases and reassignment of staff, additional expenditures for materials and changes in the use of the facility. Proposals to change the schedule to broaden offerings and ease constraints on time for collaboration and professional development were not able to be implemented due to contract limitations.

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.

Demands on the principal's time have limited her ability to make frequent classroom visits for the purpose of providing strategies for improving the quality of instruction. This

responsibility has been delegated to assistant principals. Given a large staff and a substantial percentage of teachers new to the building, much of their supervisory focus has been directed toward these teachers, which has achieved positive results. The school also supports new teachers with a mentor and assistance from literacy and math specialists. While the school encourages intervisitations, this practice is not frequent among the teaching staff. Common planning time is limited to two periods per week.

Professional development initiatives are based on student achievement data and the school's desire to increase performance. Much activity is focused on math and literacy instruction. Both subject areas are well supported by content area specialists. However, time constraints are frequently cited as barriers that prevent the optimal delivering of training. Faculty and grade conferences are supplemented by efforts to encourage teachers to engage in study groups and lunchtime workshops.

The school is an orderly environment for learning that runs smoothly and efficiently. Duties are clearly defined and delegated. Expectations are well understood and there is a sharp focus on learning throughout the school. A network of support personnel effectively supports students, both academically and socially. Guidance personnel and other specialists in the school and from outside agencies provide targeted care for students' needs very effectively. Relationships with other entities supplement students' academic and personal growth through tutoring programs, homework help and supportive social services.

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.

The school has goals for improving student outcomes, but these are not generally supported by plans that include measurable interim goals and timelines for making adjustments. Similarly, the broad vision for the future development of the school is not clearly defined among school leadership and the community. This limits the school's ability to implement procedures and systems to effect whole school change. The school has instituted goal setting by teachers for student achievement gains. Goals are communicated to assistant principals who meet with staff three times per year to discuss progress. As a relatively new practice, the impact of this has not yet been evaluated but the increased focus on assessment data throughout the school has been evident.

Teachers make good use of periodic and diagnostic data to measure the progress of students in key areas such as special education, English language learners and those receiving academic intervention. School leaders and staff make adjustments or revisions to plans and adjust actions based on measures of students' success. The school's inquiry team has made a good start in identifying a focus group of students for which it has analyzed the available data to diagnose probable impediments to learning. They anticipate greater depth of understanding as a result of forthcoming periodic assessments. Increasingly, information generated through classroom assessments and comparisons of progress across classrooms at each grade level are being used to make adjustments to the delivery of the curriculum by teachers. Grade level administrators utilize this data and other information about student progress to monitor and modify practices within their assigned grades. Upcoming periodic assessments are expected to provide data to determine the effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve learning.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Parkchester School X106	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 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		