



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Sedgwick School**

**Elementary School 109**

**1771 Popham Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10453**

**Principal: Amanda Blatter**

**Dates of review: March 31 – April 1, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Georgie Beasley**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Sedgwick School is an elementary school with 713 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 23% Black, 75% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian and Native American students. The student body includes 37% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 89.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 91% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The vision for student achievement is clearly focused on making sure everyone's specific learning needs are met.
- The principal sets very high expectations of student achievement and has effective systems in place to ensure everyone strives for success.
- A strong team structure enables every aspect of the school's work to be monitored regularly and rigorously.
- Excellent support for teachers' professional development, especially for teachers new to the school and/or profession, results in generally consistently good practice across the school.
- Assistant principals, coaches, specialists and members of the inquiry team play a full role in achieving the school's goals.
- A reflective staff team and collaborative working result in well-differentiated planning especially in reading and math, and lessons which "are engaging".
- A strong focus on building student personal development leads to high levels of self-esteem and confidence and full involvement in setting personal achievement goals.
- Relationships with parents and the local community have strengthened and both groups support the school well.
- The collation of data into a well-managed computerized system enables the school and teachers to have a comprehensive understanding of student achievement and progress.
- Data drives strategic decisions about the school's future development and effectively informs monitoring and evaluation activities.

### What the school needs to improve

- Align measures in whole school goals more closely to outcomes from data analysis.
- Continue to find ways to build parent confidence so that they provide the school more regularly with information about their children's capabilities.
- Embed the use of interim assessments in setting benchmarks against which to track school and student progress towards reaching their end goals.
- Maintain and extend opportunities for students to participate more regularly in arts programs within and/or outside the school day.

## 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.**

There is a positive team spirit in school and strong relationships that have built an atmosphere that leads to effective learning. The principal has very high expectations of everyone and there is an equally strong focus on the learning of staff, parents and students. Due to the school's focus on personal and academic achievement, students are eager to learn, behave well and have respectful attitudes to adults and each other. The school has introduced many arts programs this year for students to take part in throughout the school. Parents and students would like to see these continue next year and extended beyond because they say, "These lessons and activities are fun".

Since the previous review, the school has significantly improved the way it collects and uses data to drive goal setting and strategic decisions for school improvement. This has been particularly effective for improving programs and support for English language learners and special education students. Teachers meet everyday either formally or informally to plan well-differentiated and engaging learning that meets the needs of all students in most classes. The inquiry team's systematic approach to their work results in targeted students receiving the services they need to make good progress. Parents' adaptation of the school motto so it now reads "Children, and parents, shine at 109," is testament to them feeling so welcome and involved in school life.

### **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's computerized data system is accessible to all staff. A data wall contains graphs of every group of students' achievement in this year's interim assessments. Graphs are displayed clearly so the school can compare and track progress, and see at a glance whether one student group is achieving better than another. Questions are raised which focus on finding possible reasons for any differential achievement noted. Consequently, everyone understands well each student's achievement and progress and knows how well different groups of students are performing and progressing in all aspects of English language arts and math in all grades.

The school uses the database to quickly analyze and compare the performance and progress of different groups. Staff compare differential achievement between ethnic and gender groups, and for English language learners and special education students by

class and grade. When asked whether Hispanic students who are not English language learners were achieving as well as African American students, the school immediately produced a graph to show the relative achievement of these groups.

Data analysis has become the focal point for the work of the inquiry team. Each member of the team is responsible for tracking the progress of particular students and to make sure the services they receive are effectively improving achievement. Comparisons with a more successful local school has led to further research into why some students perform better in math than English language arts. Due to well-focused and targeted training, teachers and specialist staff have embraced the use of data to inform planning. This year, each student has a portfolio which contains a range of work in reading, writing and math and which acts as an ongoing record of their achievement and progress. Students are involved in selecting pieces to add and so can see for themselves the progress they are making.

**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.**

The school’s goals and action plans focus on raising the achievement of all students but especially those students identified by data as needing most support to achieve their potential. These include special education students, English language learners and the school’s “pushables and slippables”, those students close to the top and bottom of State test levels. Measures in goals have been based on an incremental expected increase each year. The predictive tests are helping the school to align measures of interim and end goals more closely to students’ actual achievement.

All students have individual goals which are reviewed with them three times a year. Teachers celebrate achievement of certain skills and identify next learning steps during teacher student conferences in reading, writing and math and when writing comments on student work. Students know their goals because they are always included in reflections. Student goals build into class and grade goals predicting success.

Parents value being able to support the school. They receive good information about the school’s very high expectations and their children’s goals and progress. During the year, the school shares benchmark information with parents so they know whether their children are making the progress they should. Parents have suitable opportunity to share information about their children’s capabilities at parent teacher conferences and meetings. Many parents though still lack confidence in coming into school voluntarily to offer such information. The school continues to strive to improve this aspect of its work.

**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.**

Staff are dedicated to using data to make sure learning matches the achievements and interests of students in their classes. All assessments are aligned to State standards and curriculum requirements. Teachers analyze students' responses carefully to identify the precise reason for incorrect answers and to plan relevant curriculum content accordingly. The information is used effectively to pull groups who need more teaching while those who have grasped the skill or concept are challenged with harder work. In this way centers, particularly for math and reading, focus on each student's needs. Group tasks are at different levels so students are given either the support or challenge they need to maintain or improve on their achievement level.

Good thought is given on how to engage students in lessons and how to make learning fun. Students enjoy math, art and gym in particular because lessons are practical, allow them to plan their own way of solving problems or creating artifacts, and make them think. Science lessons involve practical investigation which means all students are engaged in finding why things happen and how things work. Students are fully involved in talking about their achievements and ways to get even better because they regularly take part in self- and peer-assessment activities. There is a broad, interesting curriculum. This year, younger grades have regularly-scheduled music and older grades art. A variety of arts programs are offered during Saturday school and after school.

The school always consults data before making any decisions about scheduling, staffing and resources. Before and after-school support makes sure that each student's specific needs are met. The school has put enough English language learners in each classroom so that specialists' time can be used efficiently when they push into lessons. This in-class support ensures students are fully included in lessons and enjoy the same valuable learning as their peers. Good focus is given to developing student character. Students are involved in school decision making through the student government. In all classes, students take responsibility for looking after the learning environment. The school successfully raises student self-esteem and confidence. In response to being asked by a parent if she was nervous about taking the tests, she replied, "No, I'm going to get a high level 3." The school rewards students who come to school everyday. Coupled with more rigorous systems for monitoring absences and tardiness, the attendance rate has improved dramatically this year.

**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 monitor systematically specified lessons every day to check all staff are following the agreed lesson structure and strategies, and differentiated learning is taking place. Monitoring criteria look closely at not only what the teacher is doing but on how well students are engaged in learning. In this way administration has a very clear picture of where better and weaker aspects of instruction exist and so is able to organize relevant training and additional programs to improve instruction and boost learning further.

Excellent opportunities exist for teachers to grow professionally. To support the school's goals to improve achievement in English language arts, teachers visit a lab class every week to observe good teaching in reading and writing and are enabled to extend and

structure their instructional strategies accordingly. Coaches and assistant principals attend all collaborative planning meetings to ensure all grades use data consistently to plan well-differentiated learning. Specialist staff work closely with grade teams to make sure that when they push-in, the support they give to the students they service is relevant to learning in class. Teachers new to the school and/or profession receive a mentor and a comprehensively planned program of support and training aligned to their needs. Individual teacher reflection meetings with administration identify key improvement goals which inform further monitoring visits and training needs.

Students feel safe and well cared for in school. They report some misbehavior and lack of respect from a small number of other students but say that procedures are effective in dealing with all situations. Behavior is generally good in school. All systems are followed consistently by all staff because they are clear about the procedures and policies outlined in the school's "non-negotiables" document. Staff value the principal's weekly bulletin that outlines that week's schedule and details curriculum expectations.

Positive partnerships with community groups give students good access to arts activities this year. Many parents volunteer to help in classrooms and due to effective training give valuable support to student learning. Field trips into the local community and beyond enrich and enliven learning further. The school's partnership with Teachers' College has strengthened literacy instruction.

**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 principal is determined that students will reach their potential and shares this vision successfully with staff, parents and students. As a result, the school's various teams constantly reflect on and evaluate all aspects of the school's work. Every meeting starts with a celebration and sharing out of what has gone well. This enables team members to reflect on effective practice, to keep and build on what is working well and to identify issues that still need to be tackled. Ongoing reflection and review involve all staff and build into an end-of-year evaluation of the whole school that informs curriculum, instructional and operational planning for the following year.

The school's goals detail the action required to improve its effectiveness. Student and teacher outcomes form the basis of these goals. The school uses assessment data well to monitor and evaluate student progress. This year, the school has started to use interim assessments as benchmarks against which to track student progress, and so the school's progress toward meeting their end goals. This measure includes an evaluation of whether students are making the expected progress. Benchmark levels in reading at certain points throughout the year enable the school to evaluate not just whether students are making progress but whether this progress is enough. This effective practice is being extended to writing and math this year. Teachers analyze every question in assessments and assignments to identify those students who need additional help in achieving specific knowledge understanding and skills in reading and math. Ongoing discussions result in speedy adjustments to curriculum and instructional planning when any student is found not to be making the progress they should.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Sedgwick School</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.

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	
<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.

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		
<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.

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		
<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>