



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public School 119

**1075 Pugsley Avenue
Bronx
NY 10472**

Principal: Lydia Bassett Tyner

Dates of review: November 1 – 2, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Alvin Jeffs

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 119 is an elementary school with 905 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 12% Black, 56% Hispanic, 2% White and 28% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 7% 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 is 92.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 81.3% eligibility.

The school has undergone recently a number of organizational changes. The re-location of some classes and the addition of a fifth grade have meant that the school is now based on three sites. It now has one-fifth of its population that are English learners, a figure that has been growing steadily. There is considerable student mobility, with only two-thirds staying from pre-kindergarten through grade 5.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- It provides a caring and stimulating environment which parents and students value.
- The principal leads by example, combining respect with a purposeful drive for student progress.
- Teaching is consistently good, engaging students and encouraging independence in learning.
- Senior staff are exemplary in their collection and analysis of data and in acting promptly on their conclusions.
- Successful and popular clubs further enrich a curriculum that provides many stimulating experiences.
- Attendance is improving as the result of excellent initiatives and the hard work of many staff.
- The learning environment is colorful and supportive with a steadily developing use of up-to-date technology resources.
- The large number of new staff is well supported by a very good induction program.
- Special education students are identified very early and support is very well targeted to ensure they make good progress.
- Students are well behaved, articulate with visitors and show respect for adults and children throughout the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop strategies that assist teachers to differentiate work.
- Ensure that every teacher sets goals routinely with and for individual students.
- Develop consistent systems for assessment, monitoring and evaluation of student progress at grade level.
- Increase the use of interim targets and define responsibilities when planning developments.

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.

This is a high achieving school that supports both staff and students well. As a result of this and the consistent drive for high performance, student progress in English language arts and math over the past three years has been considerable. The school has coped with potentially disruptive changes to its organization admirably and remains an orderly and safe environment.

The school generates and analyzes data very well at leadership level and all teachers collaborate effectively to share data on individual students. Careful budgeting, responsive scheduling and good staff appointments support the focus on high achievement. A broad curriculum is taught in a consistent and stimulating way. Teachers increasingly plan for groups within lessons, but the differentiation of tasks is better in some classes than in others. Monitoring and evaluation of progress at class and grade levels is not yet as rigorous and regular as it is within the leadership team. Staff are receiving professional development to improve this deficiency.

The school responded well to the areas for improvement in the previous quality review. Technology and classroom resources have developed well, contributing to a very stimulating learning environment. Some significant work has been carried out to enrich the school curriculum and other activities for higher achieving students.

The inquiry team is making considerable progress in identifying groups at risk of underachievement and are developing technology-based systems that will soon allow teachers to receive and analyze data on a regular basis.

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 uses technology and staff expertise well to maintain a regularly updated database of student performance and progress. As a result, its understanding of special education students and English language learners is sharp and current, based on the school's eight-week assessment cycle.

School leaders view and analyze data from many sources. These include Teachers' College reports, grade exams and systems for early childhood literacy assessment. This data is supplemented with 'informal' data, from classroom running records, teacher-student

conferences and student portfolios of work. In this way, all have a clear picture of how every student and subgroup is progressing. Positive action invariably follows. Thus, when a recent data analysis indicated that Bengali boys' results had dropped, this prompted the school to consider how better to celebrate the Bengali culture. In addition, when data showed that boys' performance overall lagged behind that of girls, the response was to enrich classroom libraries and improve boys' motivation to write by giving them more control of topic choice.

The school regularly compares current performance with its own past results and those of similar schools. The principal is building on this excellent approach to data collection and analysis. Professional development is underway that aims to equip all class teachers and grade consultants with the skills necessary for even sharper evaluation of student progress on a daily basis in order to improve the effectiveness of instruction.

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 is outstanding in its use of data to identify students in greatest need of improvement. Academic intervention service staff work closely with classroom teachers to assess these students, developing highly effective plans and setting up a regular review cycle. The quality of target setting by these staff is very good.

Collaboration is a real strength of the school. There is an excellent communication system and close links between the school leadership and classroom teachers. This means that all discussions are well informed and trends in progress noted. Case conferences and informal discussions are infused with a detailed knowledge of student performance and behavior. The principal believes in allowing class teachers freedom in collecting assessment and monitoring procedures. This is highly motivating for staff but leads to inconsistencies in the way that assessment is carried out and in its effectiveness. Teachers also vary in the ways in which they share targets with students and parents. Some use informal and intuitive approaches, while others have systematized ways of recording and sharing information. This variation in practice means that their knowledge of the progress of different groups of students at grade level is not as sharp and useful as within the leadership team. Students indicate that they receive good advice and support from their teachers, but, once again, practice varies when it comes to the detailed discussion of academic targets.

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 provides a broad and stimulating curriculum whereby successful English language arts and math courses are matched by equally enjoyable work in art, health and physical education. Science is developing well, as is the use of technology in the classroom. Clubs, such as chess, cooking and ballroom dancing enrich the students' experience and are highly valued by students and parents alike.

The richness of the school experience arises from the excellent resources provided. The budget has been carefully and imaginatively used, for example, to provide resources for the highly successful “100 Book Challenge”. It has also strengthened the staff by appointing a character education teacher who deals with personal and relationship skills, supporting class size reductions in grade 3 and developing test preparation sessions.

The eight-week assessment cycle and the freedom of staff to develop a range of techniques to identify progress means that there is current data on every student in every subject. Although all teachers make good use of ability groupings within their lesson planning, there is not yet a process whereby every teacher goes one step further and uses the available data to design and review student goals on a day-to-day basis.

There is a high level of trust throughout the school. This means that students feel safe and say that if they have a problem, “An adult is always there to help”. Parents agree that the school knows their child well and responds quickly and appropriately to personal problems. All staff are readily accessible and maintain regular and helpful links by phone, through notes home and by regular teacher-parent conferences.

Attendance has improved as the result of the careful monitoring of data and the commitment of a core group of staff. Prompt action through first-day phone-calls and regular links between staff and home have seen the attendance figures rise to nearly 94% at the point of the Quality Review. The school’s infrastructure of social workers, guidance counselors and a parent coordinator is strong and ensures the continuation of high expectations for student’s’ personal development.

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 consistently high standard of teaching is supported by regular and detailed classroom observations by senior staff. While this is effective, the principal also insists that she trusts staff to check on their own performance since, “All of our teachers hold themselves accountable”.

Formal observations are matched by regular inter-visitations between staff, which encourage the sharing of good practice. This has been particularly successful in the pre-kindergarten through grade 2 classes. Staff new to the school, say that the induction program and the openness of all staff ensure that they are very well supported. The many teachers new to education have settled in equally well. As a result, the high standard of classroom teaching has been maintained and improved.

All staff receive high quality professional development based on the needs identified through data collection and analysis. Thus, work on writing workshops has arisen from the Teachers’ College initiative, which, in turn, was instituted as a response to the analysis of students’ written work. Currently, professional development responds to school need by having a strong emphasis on the use of data to plan lessons and monitor student progress at grade levels.

Clear and well-observed procedures around the school have contributed substantially to excellent student behavior and an almost negligible level of suspensions.

Partnerships with organizations such as the Bronx YMCA, the Give and Learn Foundation, Studio in School and the American Ballroom Theatre have significantly enriched the curriculum. Similarly, close links with outside counseling, mental health and attendance professionals have contributed strongly to the rapid and effective response to any student's personal difficulties.

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 has a very clear vision for the school that manifests itself in the careful monitoring of progress throughout the year. This rigor has not always been in place, but is now demonstrated by all members of the school cabinet. The school leadership sees the increased use of data and technology as the means by which teachers and grade teams will be able to assess the progress of key subgroups throughout the school and enhance differentiation within lessons.

The school's strategic planning uses both long-term and interim goals. This means that student progress and the development of new initiatives, such as the writing workshops or the "100 Book Challenge" can be reviewed on a regular basis and modified if necessary. This responsiveness has been the reason for moving from 'push in' to 'pull out' strategies for English language learners. It also underlies the investment in the Foundations phonic program over the past year.

The school's self-evaluation is thoughtful and well focused on what to do next and by when. This rigorous approach is steadily permeating the many committees within the school, each of which is chaired by a member of the school cabinet.

Similarly, academic intervention service and English language learner teachers are all adept at assessing students, setting goals and reviewing progress. This works very well, particularly within the process of developing students' individual education plans.

The culture of setting interim goals for students throughout the year is one that school leaders and specialist teachers accept very readily. However, this has not fully permeated discussions at grade level by all staff throughout the school.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 119	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 make 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