



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Garret A Morgan School

**Elementary School 132
1245 Washington Avenue
Bronx
NY 10456**

Principal: Anissa Chalmers

Dates of review: May 27– 28, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Sue Alton

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

Garrett A Morgan is an elementary school with 586 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 43% Black and 57% Hispanic students. The student body includes 24% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 87.9%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 89% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal leads the school very well and students appreciate the improvements she has made.
- Administration has a clear vision for future improvements and a good understanding of the change process necessary to accomplish this.
- Students enjoy school and respect their teachers.
- All staff use data very effectively to track the progress of students, classes and grades.
- Special education students and English language learners are tracked effectively and this information is used carefully to plan support.
- Staff work collaboratively to set long term and interim goals for students and timescales for meeting them.
- Professional development is effectively planned to support school, student and teacher goals and is valued by staff.
- Attendance is improving as a result of reward systems and rigorous tracking.
- There is good team work and teachers make good use of opportunities to meet, share effective practice and learn from each other.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure the new whole school plan has quantifiable long-term and interim goals and timescales for evaluation, and share these goals with everyone.
- Establish formal, recorded monitoring and evaluation processes for all plans, to ensure teachers know what they need to do to improve practice.
- Ensure all teachers use data consistently to provide a differentiated and engaging curriculum that meets the needs of all students.
- Develop processes to analyze the performance and progress of groups, particularly different ethnic groups, to support planning.
- Improve systems to ensure effective communication and understanding of long-term, interim goals and steps to achieve them, by students and parents.
- Refine induction processes for teachers new to the school to ensure they are appropriately supported and their needs are met throughout the year.

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 proficient.

The principal leads the school very well and is well supported by her assistant principals. Improvements to date reflect their skills in implementing the change process. Their clear vision for the future of the school and the systems they have introduced are leading to improvements, for example, attendance has improved by over 2%. Students enjoy school and respect their teachers, as one student said, "They care and they fuss till we get it right!" Administration continues to introduce systems and structures to support learning. This includes a range of carefully planned professional development, focused on increasing teacher knowledge, expertise and use of data to raise student achievement. The impact of this is evident in the confidence of all staff to use data to track student progress, identify issues and trends and to set goals. However, no formal analysis of the progress of different ethnic groups is undertaken. Data is used effectively to identify support for special education students and English language learners. Using data to plan differentiated and engaging instruction is still inconsistent. Improving weaknesses in English language arts and mathematics, identified in the last review, has been a focus and there has been improvements in student achievement, although science is still an area for improvement. Effective data analysis now provides good and reliable information for administration to hold teachers accountable for student progress and achievement, when they meet to discuss progress. Teamwork is good and teachers enjoy formal and informal opportunities for professional development as they continually focus on improving their practice. The school has made progress in this aspect since the last review. Although professional development opportunities are extensive, the induction program for new teachers is inconsistent.

Interim and long-term student goals are established in teachers' plans, although not all parents or students understand these or what needs to be done to achieve them and this restricts progress. The comprehensive education plan does not include quantifiable interim goals and timescales for achieving them, so progress towards goals cannot be checked. Recorded monitoring and evaluation processes to track the effectiveness of the plans and progress towards goals are not in place, which means there is no systematic strategic overview of progress. Following the last review, plans identify roles and responsibilities and budget, leading to more focused planning. The work of the inquiry team supports future planning because data is now used more effectively to identify concerns and there is a more systematic approach to the teaching of reading.

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.

Extensive professional development has resulted in all staff using data very well to track and monitor the progress of individual students, classes and grades. Special education students and English language learners are equally well tracked and there is an increased focus on "push in", enabling these students to be appropriately supported in their main curriculum. Data analysis identified underachievement for some bi-lingual students in English language arts. Following discussion with parents, the curriculum is now taught in English, leading to improved test scores for these students. The progress report identifies lower achievement for special education students and English language learners in English language arts. In response, the school is focusing on improving reading stamina and teachers received professional development on best ways to support these students in class. One impact from this is the number of special education students who are decertified has increased and English language arts scores have improved for both special education students and English language learners.

The school tracks progress over time, for individual students, classes and grades to identify trends and to support planning. Although scores are still low, data shows improvements since these systems have been introduced. Administration, cabinet and teachers consider carefully the progress of girls and boys and higher achieving students. As a result of discussions with boys, a range of books to appeal to their interests has been purchased. Evaluation of this by administration shows boys are increasing their motivation to read as well as improving their reading stamina. Higher achieving students are identified and targeted for a range of extended activities after school all year round and this has yet to be evaluated. The school does not yet analyze data to consider the progress and performance of different ethnic groups. Comparisons are made with similar schools and other schools within the network, leading to planning systems to improve continuity from kindergarten through grade 12 and how this can be achieved.

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.

Staff work collaboratively to set measurable interim and long term goals. Teachers use these systematically to focus their plans. The inquiry team use Acuity strategically to identify students in grades 3 through 5, with particular weaknesses in comprehension. Evaluation of this work leads to a greater focus on decoding and phonics in the intervention work. Students work on a carefully planned program with key staff and after only three weeks, improvements are apparent. The research is being used to consider a more systematic approach to the teaching of reading as well as how to identify weaknesses in reading earlier in pre kindergarten and kindergarten. One member of the team observed, "This year, the school has a better recognition of where students are and their needs, as a result of using data and closer tracking systems"

Students and parents are aware of the high and realistic expectations for end of year goals. Whole school and individual students' long term and, sometimes, interim goals are shared with parents and students through report cards, meetings and conferences with teachers. However, parents and students have limited understanding of what these goals mean and what needs to be done to achieve them, which limits the effectiveness of the goal setting process. Parents appreciate the range of information they receive, the events for parents and the availability of staff when they wish to discuss areas of concern or provide information for the school about their child. Parents observe not enough parents respond to the efforts the school makes to involve parents because the activities are not always supported by translations in the way that letters are.

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 curriculum provides data about student progress and teachers often design their own assessments to track student progress against long-term and interim goals. Teachers have begun to evaluate and redesign the curriculum to ensure continuity across grades through professional development activities. As they focus on the standards for each grade, they also consider more creative approaches to instruction, which is inconsistent at present. Students enjoy the range of art and music activities, although opportunities to be involved in these are inconsistent across the school. As teachers and parents attest, relationships and trust have improved over the last year, which supports students' personal and academic development well. Teachers are held accountable through class and individual student's performance goals. These are monitored carefully by administration and issues and progress discussed at frequent meetings with teachers. Professional development focuses on differentiation and using data to inform instruction. However, whilst all teachers now show a good understanding of how to analyze data, they do not use it rigorously enough to plan stimulating and differentiated lessons to meet the needs of all students. Teachers recognize they are at different stages of development and further professional development is helping them to improve.

Budgeting and scheduling decisions focus on needs identified through data analysis. An additional assistant principal is employed to oversee special education students and English Language learners to maintain a specific overview on progress. Attendance has improved because students enjoy the rewards they receive. Daily charts around the school effectively maintain the profile of good attendance patterns and inform students of progress towards achieving the attendance goal. Absences are followed up in a systematic way through phone calls, letters and visits. As a result of this work, overall attendance has risen by 2.3% this year to 90.2%.

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 principal and assistant principals use frequent walkthroughs and formal observations of teachers to maintain the quality of instruction. These are followed by verbal and written feedback to teachers to ensure instruction continues to improve. This process is

supported by targeted and differentiated professional development. Teachers continually reflect on their practice, valuing the opportunities they have to meet to plan, share strategies and learn from each other to improve instruction. One teacher commented, "Everyone is committed to teaching our children, to help them to learn and grow. We do all we can to support each other to achieve this goal." The principal organized a successful retreat for new teachers to introduce them to each other and administration, as well as the expectations of the school. However, the current induction program does not always support new teachers' needs consistently.

The wide range of school based guidance and support services work well together to plan focused intervention and support for students and their families, based on formal and informal data and tracking of progress. There are no consistent and systematic processes for teachers to meet with services to share information and plan, in order to support students better in class. Partnerships with outside organizations, such as "Turn Around for Children", provide effective support for students and families. Arts organizations support some creative activities. Students who have access to them enjoy these activities, but too few students are able to participate. The school runs smoothly. Students, parents and teachers recognize and appreciate the changes the principal has made, including improved resources and her focus on learning and the range of rewards. During the review, students behaved well and most are keen to participate in lessons and activities. However, parents and teachers mention some students with challenging behavior and students say some students over react at times. There is no consistent school wide behavior policy, which is well communicated and understood by all, to support further improvements in behavior.

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 comprehensive education plan does not include objectively measurable goals and only includes end of year timescales, which means that monitoring and evaluating progress is restricted. However, school processes show clearly that interim goals and timescales for evaluating these are used in the daily work of the school. This has led to the improvements the school has made since the last review. Teachers are held accountable through meetings with administration to discuss progress towards long-term goals for their classes and careful tracking towards interim goals. Progress charts are highly public in the form of graphs displayed around the school so that everyone knows the progress of each class and grade. Teachers use these graphs systematically to compare progress with other classes and grades and to challenge teachers to identify what they need to do to improve progress for their class through further analysis of data. However, the school has not yet developed a formal, consistently recorded process for monitoring and evaluating progress against plans. Plans are adjusted as a result of data analysis, tracking and evaluation of interventions, but these adjustments and new goals are not always formally recorded against original plans as part of systematic monitoring and evaluation processes. Administration use information from data, tracking and evaluation of strategies to set new goals and plan further improvement effectively. They have a clear vision for the future of the school, which is shared by the school community. The school has made significant improvements in the last year which staff and parents recognize, demonstrating the ability of administration to plan and manage change effectively. As a coach said, "When we see the need for a change, we make it. We're always wanting to get better!"

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Garret A Morgan 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