



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Pablo Casals**

**Middle School 181  
800 Baychester Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10475**

**Principal: Christopher Warnock**

**Dates of review: October 22 - 23, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Barbara Kwiecinski**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Pablo Casals is a middle school with 619 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 60% Black, 32% Hispanic, 3% White and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 92%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Staff uses data very effectively to improve the performance outcomes of all groups of students, including special education students.
- The two assistant principals translate the principal's vision into practice by exhibiting role model behavior and being excellent academy leaders.
- The broad academic intervention program is having a very positive effect on student progress.
- Communication between the school and parents and caregivers is of exceptional quality, including support to enable them to understand all aspects of their students learning journey.
- All students have high quality assessment portfolios and all teachers have a good understanding of each student's performance and progress.
- English language arts and math plans contain projected goals and effective measures are made of student performance towards these.
- Clear procedures contribute to the positive learning environment, allowing all students to be proud of themselves.
- The high profile of the administration in terms of learning walks, observations and classroom surveys supports teachers in continually improving their instruction.
- Collaboration between staff is excellent, where teachers feel supported, support each other and continually evaluate their practice.
- The TALENTS program is enjoyed by students and adds another dimension to a broad and engaging curriculum.

### What the school needs to improve

- Further extend the very positive and exciting after school activities.
- Increase the use of technology in all curriculum areas and extend student's independent learning.
- Ensure that whole school written plans with identified timeframes that drive the school improvement cycle underpins the principal's clearly articulated vision.
- Look for strategic ways to further refine professional development.

## 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.**

The school provides a very safe, caring learning environment and continually strives to meet the needs of all its students. The school is divided into three distinct populations, general education, special education and the gifted program. There is a further sub-division into two distinct academies. These are very led by the assistant principals. The school prides itself on knowing all its students and providing appropriate instruction based on academic and personal need. The principal and assistant principals form a very cohesive team. They lead by example and believe that the administration needs to teach to fully understand the curriculum and effectively support teachers. They spend as much time as possible in classrooms. They team teach, observe lessons, carry out learning walks and ensure that all classrooms are of the same high standard and comply with their environmental check list. This results in a very collaborative faculty where both veteran and newly assigned teachers have a buddy with whom they can confide. There is also extensive sharing of practice and teachers formally observe each other's lessons and are always looking for opportunities to improve. Data is used extensively and comparisons on student performance is made year on year, across grades and between subjects. Targets are set and progress towards these is tracked on a regular basis. The school embraces standards-driven instruction and works hard to create students who are problem solvers and lifelong learners. The talent program excites students and they are able to choose from a wide range of programs including Inquiry Based Math, technology and debate. This results in many students being selected for specialized high schools.

The school has successfully addressed the areas that were highlighted for improvement during last year's Quality Review. For example, teachers now clearly understand their role in monitoring progress to inform instruction and new systems for tracking student progress are used by all staff. The impact of the learning communities is having a positive effect on standards and progress. The school has used an inquiry team model prior to this academic year. The new team is excited by the new data tools and has already spent time interrogating the program. The wide academic intervention program very effectively meets all students' need.

#### **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.**

Since his appointment the principal has worked tirelessly to introduce and extend the use of data to understand the performance of students. During the past two years all staff

have been on a rapid learning journey. Data is now consistently used by all staff. Teachers have well ordered assessment binders and student portfolios are of high quality. Teachers therefore know exactly what students know and can do and use formal and informal assessments to measure progress. The school has very good communication systems and the weekly data meetings, the meetings of the inquiry team and department meetings result in teachers understanding how to use data. The school is pleased by the improved performance of special education students and Black and Hispanic students in English language arts and math. The progress of these students is carefully tracked. Each grade has a gifted class. Teachers of these students have common planning time. This enables them to compare progress across departments. For consistency, teachers loop with the high achieving students which makes it easier for them to make year on year comparisons. The support mechanisms in the school are extensive. In addition to supporting teachers in lessons, the literacy and math coaches work very effectively with teachers to use data to inform their planning.

The school is very proud of its academic intervention team. They meet regularly and scrutinize the personalized academic intervention programs. Students receive support through the early morning mandated program and in addition students performing at low levels receive further support during the talent program. Students speak positively about the individualized help they receive. They say, "Teachers try to find alternative ways to help you learn when you don't understand".

**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 principal is a very effective communicator. He has great vision and conveys this to his assistant principals. They very capably translate this vision into reality. Their record keeping is exemplary and there are very clear improvement plans in place with projected levels, timeframes and goals, in English language arts and math. Progress towards these goals is carefully tracked and it is the school's intention to extend this very good practice into science and social studies. Student portfolios are consistent across the subject areas. They travel with students across the grades giving teachers a clear picture of previous goals and strengths and weaknesses. Students with the greatest need are well supported. They speak very positively about their teachers and know what their individual goals are.

Teachers describe the school as an extended family saying "there is a positive energy within the building where all staff work together for the good of the students". Teachers said that the opening school year conference clearly set the tone for the academic year, with an emphasis on standards, progress and goals.

Communication with parents is very good and the principal is encouraging more communication between home and school by e-mail. He sees this as one way of avoiding communications getting left in students' school bags and a reliable tool for getting important materials to parents quickly. Parents welcome the fact that interim reports are sent home and they like the informative monthly calendar. They are pleased to receive early information on their students' progress, as they believe the November report card is distributed too late in the year. The parents' focus group meets daily and link closely with the parents association and the students. This results in a comprehensive program where parents and teachers plan strategies together to help parents give better academic support to their students.

**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 uses all available data to group students appropriately through the curriculum. Teachers see the extended academic intervention program as one of the principal's priorities in order to support all students' learning. The academic intervention team work very hard during the summer holiday to ensure that all students are correctly placed for the beginning of the academic year. Enrichment activities are in place for all students every morning. This has resulted in the students with the greatest need not feeling targeted. It has raised their self-esteem and as a result their progress is improving. Students are able to choose a talent option. They speak about these programs very positively and enjoy the challenges set for them. In an inquiry-based math lesson students were able to make bridges from straws, to particular specifications and give clear evaluations as to why they were going to build these in a particular way. Students enjoy developing their debating and reasoning skills and see the relevance of their studies to high school preparation. The school is well respected across New York City for its high quality robotics instruction. In addition to Regents tests the gifted students take Spanish proficiency examinations. This results in students being well prepared for specialist high school. Art, music, technology and drama are of high quality despite the school not having its own auditorium. Linking these additional activities to the core curriculum, results in teachers having a vast quantity of meaningful data, which informs instruction.

Accountability procedures are very clear and the administration leads by example, including teaching in the classroom. All observations have pre and post meetings and where there are deficiencies, appropriate support strategies with defined timeframes are put in place. When teachers put policies into practice, combined with making lessons fun and exciting, the principal sends teachers letters of thanks. Students speak very positively about the school's learning environment. They enjoy using technology and like it when they can use the smart boards with teachers and where lessons relate to "real life situations". Throughout the school there are examples of good differentiated teaching.

Students are very clear about the schools expectations and the daily class sheet that travels with them gives the home based teacher an accurate picture of the class's rating for each lesson. This gives another dimension to tracking students' personal and academic development. The daily sheets are collated and the administration link this to both student need and teacher development. The school has attendance celebrations and incentives as well as before school motivational activities to maintain its attendance rate.

**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.**

All teachers have undergone training on differentiated instruction and are aware of the expectations of the administration. They have been able to successfully implement in the classroom what they have learned in the training. They welcome feedback and a culture of "learning from each other" has been established. Intervisitations are formally in place and teachers have common recording sheets, which enable good practice to be further

shared. New teachers speak positively about the support they receive and are proactive in seeking new strategies that will improve their performance. Staff developers, coaches, key teachers and assistant principals push in for demonstration lessons. This further reinforces the fact that everyone is a learner and provides a safe environment where it is “alright to make mistakes”

Professional development needs are identified based on data and the school has professional development workshops on an after school rolling program that teachers can attend. This has improved teachers’ instruction overall.

The school government is fully functioning and students are encouraged to take on additional responsibilities. Each member of the student government has a code of conduct, which must be strictly adhered to. All students have a clear understanding of the purposes of a student council and their views are taken into account. In addition service league activities increase student’s awareness of social problems. Collecting cellular phones to donate to battered women is just one example of the many positive activities undertaken.

The school runs very smoothly and great respect is shown between staff and students and students and students. The school shares the building with a school for autistic students. There are very positive links between the schools including opportunities for the students to work at Pablo Casals. This has a very positive effect on the personal growth of students from both of the schools.

**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.**

There is very effective planning and target setting based on all available data sources, in English language arts and math. The plans contain quantifiable goals within defined timeframes. Success measures are in place and the school is proud of its progress. This good practice is now going to be extended to other curriculum areas. The school is very good at supporting teachers and the structured formal and informal observation schedules contain measurable goals. All members of the cabinet have a clear understanding of each teacher’s strengths and areas for development. Teachers are supported to take on extra responsibility and capacity building is very good. Periodic assessment, linked to informal and formal assessments effectively assess student’s progress. Teachers are always looking for more effective ways to improve their instruction and their planning is adapted accordingly. The principal’s vision is very clear. All staff, parents and students understand it. He is charismatic, always available and empowers teachers very effectively. The principal has identified that the next stage in goal setting needs to be driven by each plan’s interim and final outcomes.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

|                                  |   |   |   |   |   |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>SCHOOL NAME: Pablo Casals</b> | △ | ▶ | ✓ | + | ◇ |
| <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 . . .  | △ | ▶ | ✓ | + | ◇ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 . . .  | △ | ▶ | ✓ | + | ◇ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>  |   |   |   | X |   |

| <b>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.</b> |          |          |          |          |          |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>  | <b>Δ</b> | <b>▶</b> | <b>✓</b> | <b>+</b> | <b>◇</b> |
| 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        |          |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>   |          |          |          | <b>X</b> |          |

| <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?   |          |          |          | 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>   |          |          |          | <b>X</b> |          |

| <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 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        |          |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>   |          |          |          | <b>X</b> |          |