



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Dr Evelina Lopez-Antonetty Children's Literacy
Center**

**Public School 277
519 St Anns Avenue
Bronx
NY 10455**

Principal: Cheryl Tyler

Dates of review: May 15 - 16, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Elizabeth Lopez

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

Dr Evelina Lopez-Antonetty Children's Literacy Center is an elementary school with 541 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 21% Black, 77% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 87.9%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 73% eligibility.

The school is in its second year of partnership with Teachers College, Columbia University which has shaped the framework for the English language arts curriculum in reading and writing. This partnership offers a wide array of professional development opportunities including: workshops for teachers and academic coaches, monthly conferences for the principal, and consultants who visit the school weekly to conduct lab sites and hold planning meetings with teachers.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a strong commitment to the school, has gained the confidence of the community, and has a clear vision to move forward.
- The English language arts curriculum is effectively planned and delivered within a culture of collaboration and teamwork.
- The school uses data effectively to set reading goals for all students which are monitored and revisited on a regular basis.
- Data is used to group students for differentiated support thus providing effective instruction in English language arts.
- Collaboration in planning has brought consistency in instruction in English language arts which has led to high levels of student engagement.
- Intervention programs support students who have not mastered identified skills.
- There is a developing program of differentiated professional development which effectively supports the needs of individual teachers.
- Parents and students are very satisfied with the work of the school, dedication of the staff, and home-school partnership.
- Students feel safe, trust their teachers, and feel adult help is very accessible for social, personal, and academic needs.
- Clearly communicated and well-established systems ensure the school runs smoothly and the environment is purposeful.

What the school needs to improve

- Use data more consistently in math to give a constantly updated picture of every grade, class, and individual student's achievement.
- Analyze the reason for, and develop strategies for dealing with, the slow progress of students in mathematics.
- Involve students in their learning by setting clear short term goals and provide them with the next steps needed to achieve interim goals.
- Formalize the practice of comparing student progress within and across classrooms and grades.
- Formalize the process of setting goals for teachers as part of their continuing 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 proficient.

The administration has been in place for two years and the school has since undergone a period of transition during which it has made many strides towards becoming a more effective school. Since the last review, the school has made a number of significant changes to its curriculum, assessments, and the way it gathers and uses data. This is particularly notable in English language arts where a strong partnership with Teachers College, Columbia University has shaped the framework for reading and writing and the use of assessment data to set objectively measurable interim goals. However, the school does not yet have an accessible, school-wide system for reporting data in mathematics and tracking individual student performance. There is an emerging awareness of the need to spread the best practices associated with English language arts to other content areas, especially math.

The school has been particularly effective at creating a collaborative, inquiry based and caring school culture. Staff and students enjoy coming to school, care about each other, and feel supported in their work. Teachers have many professional development opportunities to enhance their content knowledge and their pedagogical skills. The principal and assistant principal work well together and combine their strengths and interests for the benefit of students. As a result, the school has a strong capacity for continuous improvement.

The school engages in strategic planning to address key areas in improving instruction. The work of the inquiry team, for example, has been very effective in studying the language patterns of structure, syntax, and grammar and the challenges they pose for English language learners. As a result of this work, the school has developed a curriculum of shared talk to explicitly teach language structure and monitor language patterns used at each developmental level of English language proficiency.

The principal has a good understanding of how the school is doing and those areas where improvement is required. She recognizes that the challenge remains to make full use of data in math and to focus more closely on tracking individual student progress.

How well the school meets New York City’s evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student’s progress over time.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school has developed a system for the regular collection and use of data to develop a clear understanding of what each student knows and the progress they are making in English language arts. The process includes administering running records to all students on a monthly basis. Results of running records are used to advance students through a leveled reading system and for grouping during guided reading. The results indicate that most students have made gains in reading levels since the onset of this program. However, data from State test results reveal that students are making very slow progress in the area of math. There is no evidence that the school has used this data to realign instructional interventions or to monitor performance in math to measure growth. Standardized test scores and other data are not routinely analyzed for differences among subgroups and the school is just beginning to develop a program to address its English language learner population using a curriculum of shared talk.

The principal has an accurate view of the progress being made by the students in English language arts and is aware of the need to extend this practice to other content areas. She has identified the need to be more systematic in the utilization of periodic assessments throughout the year for comparative purposes. As a result, she has begun to plan for the improvement of the collection, analysis, and use of data in math, but the plans are still at an early stage and have yet to be developed as sustainable, manageable tools.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school’s use of data in English language arts is helping to identify those specific learning needs which may limit student progress throughout the year. Reading goals are set, revisited, and evaluated four times a year. Student strengths are identified on a “characteristics of a reader” checklist and next steps for instruction are carefully planned. Interventions are immediately designed by three dedicated, full time Reading Recovery teachers for those students who fail to make adequate progress. The consistency in the use of data to set and monitor English language arts goals has led to significant gains in the reading level of most students. This process, however, is inconsistent in other content areas, including math. Clear and measurable goals are not set for math. Therefore, long-time improvement with clear timeframes and success criteria cannot be measured.

The high expectations of the principal are conveyed to students and staff through weekly grade level meetings and common planning meetings, the parent and student handbooks, monthly newsletters detailing the academic focus of the month, and “Family Fridays” which provide an excellent opportunity for parents to have regular contact with

the school to discuss how they can help their children progress. Parents are actively supportive of the school. The parent coordinator has effectively set up many initiatives that ensure the individual needs of students and their families are met.

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 planned curriculum reflects the school’s mission to maintain high academic standards and develop an inquiry approach to learning. In the English language arts curriculum, teachers plan instruction that is aligned with the Reading and Writing Project at Teachers College, Columbia University. This program is well supported by a cycle of four staff developers from Teachers College, as well as a full time literacy coach, who work to ensure alignment across and between grades. Teachers are accountable to the principal for differentiating their instruction, based on the needs revealed by student data, including the monthly administration of running records. The instruction in math is less well-developed and the needs of some students are not addressed with sufficient speed. As a result, students have made very slow progress.

The school has identified the need to develop more consistency in the use of data by each staff member. Groups of teachers analyze a variety of English language arts data and use the data to address specific needs, but this has not been developed into a consistent, whole-school strategy. Teachers are eager to improve their practice and help students develop further proficiency in all content areas.

The school makes very good use of its resources. The reduction of class size has been a priority of the principal and has led to more active engagement in the classroom. Three full time Reading Recovery teachers provide intervention to students in kindergarten through grade 2 who are struggling with decoding and fluency. The addition of a second Reader’s Workshop block facilitates the use of guided reading with targeted intervention. Students feel cared for and respected, the behavior is good, and the climate in the school is calm, quiet, and learner-centered. The school is actively striving to raise attendance through the use of awards and incentives, the newly acquired school messenger service, and the formation of an attendance committee that meets on monthly basis. As a result, attendance has improved this year from 87.9% to 90 %.

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.

Professional development is given a high priority within the school and occurs weekly during grade level meetings. Follow-up discussions on implementation take place and there is a strong sense of collaboration and teamwork within the school. In response to slow student progress in math, the school has formed a math leadership team in

conjunction with the use of a consultant to drive the realignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment for the coming year.

Opportunities are provided for teachers to observe each other and share effective practices. Collaborative planning also supports congruence in practice. The school encourages an open door policy where teachers can visit each other's classrooms and learn from best practices. New teachers receive extensive mentoring and feel supported by coaches and colleagues. They watch model lessons from literacy and math coaches and can turn to guidance counselors easily for guidance on student behavior modification. The administration conducts formal and informal observations on a regular basis. The staff understands what is expected of them and appreciates the feedback, support, and advice. The culture of the school is centered on teamwork and the impact is evident in all areas.

The principal is respected by students, staff, and parents. She has demonstrated her ability to effect continuous change and make improvements across the school community. Through its partnership with Teachers' College, the school effectively strives for the highest achievable outcomes for all students.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school measures student performance in reading throughout the year. Running records are used very effectively to track achievement against interim goals. Guided reading and Reading Recovery intervention provide immediate support to struggling students. An analysis of student writing and other assessment measures are also used to track the progress of students in English language arts. Data generated from periodic assessments are not developed or used to plan or modify instruction or provide interventions in English language arts or math. In addition, data is not routinely used to make comparisons across schools or between grades and classes.

The school is moving forward using information contained in the available math data to devise plans that contain interim goals with measures of progress aimed at driving student achievement. This plan is in its early stages and is not yet fully developed. The school is formalizing the practice of comparing student progress within and across classrooms and has a plan to generate item analysis data from periodic assessments to help teachers modify and differentiate instruction. These practices are not yet fully in place. The principal and all staff members are clearly committed to achieving successful outcomes for every student. The students and their parents believe this, share the principal's vision, and are confident in the school's ability to move forward to meet the learning needs of all students.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Dr Evelina Lopez-Antonetty Children's Literacy Center	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