

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Public School 12

Elementary School 012

**430 Howard Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Nyree Dixon

**Dates of review: April 28 - 29, 2009
Lead Reviewer: Rhonda Hurdle-Taylor**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 12 is an elementary school with 276 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 84.06% Black, 14.49% Hispanic, 0.36% White, and 1.09% unreported students. The student body includes 3.99% English language learners and 12.68% special education students. Boys account for 51.81% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48.19%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 86.5%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 87% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The principal is unwavering in her belief that distributive leadership empowers staff to identify the necessary steps for continuous school improvement. By encouraging teachers to try new classroom strategies and to participate in leadership positions on various school-wide committees, she is building effective capacity for professional growth. As one teacher reports, "Ms. Dixon has allowed us to own our professional development". She has developed a strong, nurturing and caring school community which fosters the academic and personal growth of students. Students are excited by their classes, especially those in the arts that encourage self-expression. Skillfully supported by the assistant principal, the principal has built a highly effective collaborative community of practice. Ongoing professional development is at the core of the school's values.

Teachers use information about student outcomes adequately to monitor student progress and improve student learning. The management of data supports monitoring, goal setting, planning and immediate responses to students' learning needs. However, monitoring of student progress does not extend to all core curriculum areas. The school has done some carefully focused work in gathering student sub-group data and making comparisons and strategic decisions based upon evident need. The school's focus on third grade girls helps them to understand successful ways to promote progress and achievement within this population. This became the work of the inquiry team. This team works together effectively to consider instructional options for students and to make available and track the value of the resources provided as they relate to student academic development.

Parents own a proactive role in school-wide decision making as they serve on various committees that have an impact on academic achievement, parental involvement and safety. Parents express appreciation for the commitment the school has to the success of their children. To this end, parents state that the school has transitioned from having low, or no expectations, to college being non-negotiable for their children. Parents are confident that newly implemented structures such as reduced class size, the gender specific classes and increased arts activities will further help their school to succeed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Through regular use of a wide range of relevant data, school leaders and staff have an on-going understanding of the performance of most groups of students that informs suitable instruction and organizational adjustments.
- Families have high praise for the effective communication and personal support their children receive from the staff and the valuable opportunities to be involved in their child's learning.
- The principal is a strategic thinker and planner, who has shared her vision for raising student achievement with all stakeholders and is an excellent role model for the staff and students.
- The principal places a high priority on professional growth and provides valuable opportunities for staff to develop their skills as members of a professional learning community.
- Relationships across the school are warm, supportive and inclusive, so students, teachers and parents feel valued and take pride in being a part of the school community.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of experiences, including the arts, to facilitate students' ownership of learning so that they are "college ready".

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that all lessons are rigorously and suitably differentiated to challenge and extend every student, particularly special education students, English language learners and higher achievers.
- Further expand the present data systems for monitoring the progress of students' achievement to all core curriculum subjects and ensure that all teachers use data systematically to understand students' on-going needs, strengths and learning styles across the curriculum.
- Develop specific, measurable goals with differentiated plans and timeframes for individuals and groups of students in all subjects, and precise rubrics so that students are involved in their learning and receive detailed feedback.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to visit colleagues' lessons and observe best practices to encourage them to provide more precisely targeted instruction and to foster task engagement.

Part 3: Main Findings

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Data collection and analysis are embedded solidly in the school's culture and every effort is made to ensure they are used by staff. Teachers gather data frequently in math, science, and English language arts. Many of the teachers correctly use a variety of methods to identify learning needs and progress made by students. School leaders collect summative results made available through City assessments and measure progress and achievement of students effectively. Most teachers are diligent in collecting data to show student progress, but not all teachers use this data when planning together to improve student results. Equally, not all teachers are aware of their individual student's needs and strengths. Consequently, not all students make the progress of which they are capable. The data specialist, along with other teachers and administrators gather and analyze a significant amount of data for special education and gender specific subgroups in English language arts, math, and science. However, they do not disaggregate data for English language learners or investigate trends across core subjects to make strategic decisions to support this population successfully in the future. Comparisons of individual and gender specific student performance and progress are made from each class and across grades to measure progress and the required growth in areas of concern to the school. According to the principal, "having an all girls' and an all boys' class on the fifth grade allows us to monitor progress by gender." The school has purchased gender specific materials for these academies and student portfolios indicate growth in both classes, although school data shows that in general the girls are still outperforming the boys. The school compares its overall performance against its own past performance and with similar schools to ensure that it is improving each year.

Information about what students are learning and how they are progressing is consistently communicated to parents. Parents appreciate the school's efforts to keep them informed. Parent-teacher conferences, curriculum nights, the principal's newsletters, progress reports on units of study and informal conversations with teachers are catalysts through which parents are informed. Teachers also offer parents strategies to use at home to support their children's learning.

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 Comprehensive Educational Plan is developed through the collaboration of administrators, teachers and parents and the team uses data-informed processes as a tool to develop this document. Teachers optimize weekly common planning time and all other available opportunities to generate broad goals for individuals and groups of

students in English language arts, math and science. These goals are kept in teachers' data binders and they inform the work in student portfolios. The school has developed plans to improve goal setting in social studies with Renzulli Learning, an online tool for engaging students that helps teachers easily differentiate and enrich instruction through individualized resources tailored to each student's interests and learning style. Some teachers are not using the data well enough to plan lessons that are differentiated and that take into consideration the learning styles of students across the curriculum on an on-going basis. As data is not used rigorously, goals are not specific or differentiated with precise timeframes and measurable outcomes for individuals and groups of students, classes or grades. Equally, there is also no evidence that all teachers provide rubrics to involve students in their learning or to give them detailed feedback on their work with next steps for improving their academic performance.

The school has high expectations for its students. In their mission for the pursuit of progress teachers are encouraged to track their students' advancement from one grade to the next. Students are expected to excel at every level and college is a non-negotiable for every child. College and the quest for lifelong learning is an aspiration every family is encouraged to pursue. Students take pride in their academic success and feel that the school holds high academic standards. They feel a shared responsibility to aim for high achievement along with their teachers. An outside consultant has started the work of showing teachers how to use the results from various assessments to help develop learning goals for their students and teachers conference with students to monitor learning activity and progress against these goals. The school struggles to get a large number of parents to attend parent association meetings and workshops about student learning. The principal is aware that additional options like newsletters and back-packed notices can be effective in sharing the school's goals for academic improvement with parents and is using every possible avenue to do so.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Teachers value opportunities to plan together with colleagues to strengthen the curriculum and their instructional practice. They devise activities and create units of study that meet the standards. The school utilizes an array of instructional materials to support the curriculum frameworks set by New York State. Teachers and the academic intervention team analyzes the interim data from assessments in reading, math, science alongside other information to determine strengths and weaknesses of at-risk students as well as overall student achievement. As a result, they are able to adjust the pacing calendar to meet the needs of these students. Although social studies and literacy are integrated into the curriculum, data is not examined to monitor student progress in social studies as it is in literacy. Before-school sessions in literacy and math enable focused small group tasks, individual work and project-based activities for at-risk students. Formative data from conferencing notes and diagnostic assessments are used to identify learning outcomes, to group students and differentiate instruction. It also provides specific levels of challenge and support for the struggling students to enable them to make good progress. However, that same level of differentiation and rigorous instruction is not evident in all lessons or for higher-achieving students.

The school delivers a challenging and engaging curriculum in the core subjects and in the arts. The curriculum includes the arts to broaden and enrich students' experiences. Students enjoy dance, stepping, vocal music, and piano lessons as part of their daily program. Others learn to write and compose music, aligned to state writing standards and the various nuances of music composition. Students say that they particularly enjoy science because of the opportunities for discovery and hands-on experiments and are excited about the upcoming science state exam.

Relationships across the school are warm, supportive and inclusive, so students, teachers and parents feel valued and take pride in being part of the school community. The principal works assiduously to nurture a culture of mutual respect and trust and ensures that organizational decisions raise student achievement. School leaders made a strategic decision to hire an outside consultant who supports the staff by team teaching, providing model lessons and facilitating study groups. This rigorous approach to instruction was implemented in order to enable students to reach their learning goals. Budgetary decisions around allocating financial resources have led to improved professional development which is improving student learning. The principal has hired a consultant with a background in literacy who has been facilitating professional study groups with teachers who are taking the strategies back into the classroom to improve their practice. Teachers believe that they are accountable for student learning and want to make sure that they use all available resources to improve their teaching.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The principal and assistant principal spend a great deal of time in classrooms observing and supporting instruction and giving teachers relevant feedback from their formal and informal observations. This results in a good understanding of teacher needs and strengths and allows for differentiated professional development plans and support to improve curriculum content and pedagogy. The principal facilitates teacher self-selection opportunities to improve teacher expertise. "If we know of a professional development opportunity, Ms. Dixon will research it and approve it if she thinks it is worthwhile," said one teacher. Teachers know that they are accountable for student progress and willingly participate in study groups and individual conferences with the assistant principal to address issues arising from student data and the observation of instructional practices. They work with the literacy coach, data specialist and administrators to address their development goals. In addition, teachers meet with an outside consultant to improve their long- and short-term goals set to accelerate student progress. Ongoing visits to schools nearby enable faculty to discuss effective practices and include specific strategies into lessons to improve student achievement. However, teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to visit colleagues' lessons and share their strengths. New teachers are supported and mentored carefully by capable, experienced staff to develop effective teaching practices. They benefit from an outside consultant who models best instructional practices for them.

To nurture the academic and personal development of students, the principal has invested in additional student support and family outreach personnel. This has reduced discipline problems and conflicts between families. Mentoring programs such as "Girls Night Out" and "Boys to Men" are raising students' self-esteem and teaching the

necessary life skills. They celebrate gender differences and they are helping to improve student relationships. The principal has also introduced a program that is motivating students to raise money while striving to improve academically. The parent coordinator has established a relationship with the neighboring shelter where some students live, in order to extend support for families in crisis.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 principal is a strategic thinker and planner, who has shared her vision for raising student achievement with all stakeholders and is an excellent role model for the staff and students. The school community supports the principal's clear vision for the school's future improvement. Members applaud her determination to prepare students in a holistic manner, to include the arts, to nurture students' emotional development and to encourage self-improvement among all constituents. Through multiple levels of on-going meetings with the assistant principal, extended cabinet, the school leadership team, and various teacher teams, the principal gauges the growth and development of the staff and students as well as their ever evolving needs. English language arts, math, science, and attendance data is just some of the data the school reviews during these meetings as they revise school-wide plans throughout the year to address the changing needs. Not all teachers however, use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning on an on-going basis.

Teachers collect a range of evidence to show short and long-term progress of individual students and classes. The inquiry team collects on-going data to monitor student progress. For example, after comparative review, the team decided to focus heavily on a group of third grade girls to understand successful ways to promote progress and achievement within this population. This team works together effectively to consider instructional options for students and to make available and track the value of resources provided as they relate to student academic development.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Public School 12	△	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>				
	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			X	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?		X		
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			X	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			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 student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>				
	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?		X		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			X	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			X	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DY0, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?			X				
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?		X					
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?			X				
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?				X			
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X				
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?			X				
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?		X					
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X				
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed