

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Public School 134

Elementary School 134

**4001 18th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11218**

Principal: Debra Ramsaran

**Dates of review: May 4 - 5, 2009
Lead Reviewer: Marianne Ferrara**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 134 is an elementary school with 425 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 46% Black, 31% Hispanic, 11% White, and 12% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 95%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 92% eligibility.

The principal was appointed in January 2008.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The school collects, analyzes and uses data to set high academic and behavioral expectations that encourage and assist students to achieve their goals in all subjects. Teachers know individual students' achievement levels and share responsibility for positive learning outcomes with the students, parents and support staff. This provides an informed and welcoming environment for parental discussions and visitations, and allows parents to be partners in their children's learning.

The school evaluates organizational decisions related to all aspects of school improvement and makes adjustments that benefit the school community. The administration monitors data and regularly reviews, and revises teaching practices throughout the year to accelerate student learning. The principal has successfully maintained an environment where school improvement is the shared goal among teachers, parents and students. This is evidenced by a dedication to providing an environment rich in educational opportunities that flourishes in an overall climate of trust and support.

The effective use of resources to insure small class size and full-time guidance services benefits the academic and social development of the students. Teachers identify each child's specific strengths and areas for improvement. However, programs explicitly designed for higher-achieving students and those that address gender differences are not systemic. In addition, there is little project-based learning, which limits students' opportunities to undertake research and further develop their problem-solving skills.

A comprehensive professional development plan is in place that addresses whole-school initiatives. Personalized plans specifically designed to improve teaching and learning for individual faculty members are components of the school plan. This support positively affects learning for all students since teachers receive support and assistance on an ongoing basis. The inquiry team works collaboratively with the classroom teachers to infuse strategies that improve student learning into daily lesson planning. This benefits all students by fostering inquiry practices throughout many classes and helping all teachers to provide explicit instruction in identified areas that need improvement.

The school makes every effort to provide many celebrations and guidance programs for its students. However, partnerships with community-based organizations and outside agencies that could provide opportunities for recreational and enrichment activities are limited.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's clear vision, shared with and supported by the whole faculty, is instrumental in bringing about student improvement.
- The school effectively gathers and analyzes data from various sources to create learning profiles for individual students to monitor achievement and progress and accelerate learning in all subjects.
- The administration and staff communicate high expectations of achievement and behavior to students and their families.
- The school uses resources effectively to provide a good adult-to-student ratio, ensuring students are well supported through small-group instruction to make good progress.
- There is a relevant and extensive professional development program for all teachers that addresses the school's needs extremely well.
- The inquiry team consistently uses collaborative and data-informed processes to identify instructional practices and implement strategies to address students' needs.
- The principal regularly uses various data sources to evaluate the effectiveness of organizational decisions, interventions, professional development and use of staff.

What the school needs to improve

- Apply the same rigor in analyzing information related to gender and higher achievers that is used effectively for all other relevant subgroups to provide a curriculum and differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of these students.
- Expand the use of project-based learning to give students more opportunities to undertake research and solve problems.
- Identify ways to develop partnerships with community organizations to provide additional enrichment activities for all students.

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 well developed.

The school gathers detailed information for each student from multiple sources of evaluative data. It then interprets the data accurately and comprehensively to provide a clear picture of each student's strengths and areas for improvement for the teacher, student and parent. This enables the administration to monitor student progress consistently on an ongoing basis and ensure teachers are addressing specific learning targets for individuals, as well as for some subgroups of students, in all subjects. Teachers and support staff use data from checklists, running records, teacher conferencing and observations to coordinate services for student with identified needs. While the school effectively identifies the needs of special education students, English language learners and students requiring academic intervention, they do not yet provide a complete profile of progress for gender subgroups or for higher-achieving students. As a result, programs are not currently in place for these subgroups that specifically address and enrich their strengths and interests.

Teachers confer with students to discuss areas that need improvement. Students are able to articulate what they have learned and what they need to do better and are encouraged to reflect on their progress. This understanding of their achievement levels enables them to engage in ongoing self-evaluation and goal setting. Parents receive report cards and progress reports throughout the year that also indicate each student's present reading level and the level he or she should reach by the end of the grade. The school provides recommendations regarding level-appropriate book titles to assist parents in their efforts to support for their children. Since the school sends out reports six times a year, families are able track the progress of their children and stay well informed. The administration and staff meet monthly to analyze student data and make appropriate revisions to lessons to ensure continuous student improvement.

The administration consistently reviews and analyzes classroom data to identify patterns throughout the school. For example, when the data indicated that students were struggling with open-response math problems school-wide, the math coach provided the teachers and students with the necessary support to address this skill.

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.

Teachers provide students with written and oral feedback regarding their progress. They use this information to assist their students in goal setting which is based on teacher review of formative and summative data and classroom performance. This allows students to have a clear understanding of what they need to do to succeed. The school implements the workshop model in all curriculum areas. This enables teachers to work

with individuals or small groups on a common skill or strategy for which they need support. Goals for higher-achieving students that enrich and extend the curriculum are not yet fully in place. The school does not have a systemic program in place that consistently and rigorously challenges these students. The entire school uses instructional programs that indicate clear timeframes for English language arts and math. Timeframes for other core subjects are in alignment with the State standards. Consistent review of student progress and the timeframes for reaching benchmarks help teachers to analyze their own instructional practices and provide students with the support needed to achieve their goals. School leaders meet with faculty members at monthly grade conferences as well as during professional development periods to discuss, review and adjust student goals and timeframes for meeting them.

School leaders, together with the school leadership team, use school-wide data such as the Progress Report and the Learning Environment Survey to identify the goals in the Comprehensive Educational Plan. This collaborative effort informs all constituents of areas requiring improvement and sets the focus for the implementation of action plans to achieve these goals. The gathering, recording and interpreting of comprehensive records results in plans that are appropriate and timely for reaching school goals.

School leaders and staff communicate high expectations to the students and parents. The school engages students in individual and group goal setting and shares this information with parents. The faculty encourages parents to be partners in their children's learning and parents express satisfaction with the personal attention and interest the school shows toward their children. They are open to constructive suggestions and take the necessary steps to work with teachers in order for their children to succeed. The school invites parents to workshops and school events, such as subject-based family nights. Since 90% of the student body does not live in the area, the school provides a bus service for parents to attend school activities. There are also many school incentives to celebrate good behaviors. Student of the Month, Caught Being Super, Random Acts of Kindness and good attendance recognition all highlight students' positive performance.

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.

The school aligns the curriculum to State standards and ensures that lessons are grade-level appropriate. Curriculum mapping provides a framework for teachers across subject areas resulting in the implementation of interdisciplinary instruction. Class activities support stated goals and students profit from the in-depth data analysis that helps teachers identify individual strengths and areas for improvement. The teachers know their students well and discuss with one another the various instructional methods that will ensure student success. Teachers create differentiated lesson plans and give targeted instruction to most subgroups and to individual students. However, they do not sufficiently differentiate lessons to challenge and extend the learning of high achievers.

Teachers use the data to identify the strategies that are necessary for students to advance to the next level. They provide activities and experiences that address students' learning targets by using resources and materials that enrich instruction. The administration uses the school budget for students to be taught in small classes. This is a priority as they recognize that teachers are better able to know their students and

deliver instruction specific to student achievement when there is a good adult-to-student ratio. This is particularly evident for the instruction of special education students, English language learners and students in need of academic intervention services. However, the same attention is not given to engaging higher-achieving students in lesson activities. While teachers know the achievement levels of these students, there is no definitive program in place to ensure they consistently have rigorous and interesting enrichment opportunities. At present, the school does not provide extensive curriculum materials to address gender-specific interests.

The strong collaboration between the administration and the teachers results in a culture of respect and trust. The Learning Environment Survey indicates that teachers recognize and respect each other. They collaborate by sharing suggestions and taking the necessary steps to create and encourage strategies for executing change in a timely and professional manner. Parents maintain that the school values their input and they are confident that their children receive excellent academic and social support. One parent stated, "My daughter is faced with the challenges she needs to succeed." Students enjoy coming to school and articulate that learning is important to them and their families. The school strives to give positive feedback to students and places value on their individual contributions.

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 well developed.

A detailed record of recommendations made in teacher observation reports enables school leaders to provide professional development opportunities specific to teachers' needs. Ongoing support from Teacher College consultants, literacy and math coaches and administrators assist teachers in developing and refining teaching skills that benefit students. School leaders use information from classroom observations and student evaluations to generate personalized professional development plans for each teacher. Prior to the beginning of the school year, new teachers receive training on lesson development, management and administrative issues. By observing model lessons and participating in intervisitations and collaborative planning time, teachers take advantage of the many opportunities to be self-reflective and learn from one another. Good teaching practices results in high achievement on State assessments.

The inquiry team carefully examines data from formative and summative assessments and uses this information to identify strategies that will help the targeted students. There are consistent conversations between the team and the classroom teachers. This enables the students to receive the support they need as part of their daily classroom instruction. The teachers working with these students use strategies that benefit the entire class. During faculty meetings and grade-level conferences, inquiry team members share their findings and best practices with the school community.

To ensure the students receive the support services they require, the school allocates funds for a full-time guidance counselor. The school social worker and psychologist also give students assistance. Since services are limited, when necessary the school recommends outside agencies to help students and their families receive additional social-emotional support. School personnel provide enrichment and recreational services for students. Presently, the school does not collaborate with community-based organizations or agencies to provide increased youth services during or after the school day.

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 well developed.

The principal is proactive and successful in maintaining a learning environment that is rich in educational opportunities. She projects a positive attitude and exhibits a highly professional demeanor. The school is well ordered and the classrooms are productive, providing students with an environment conducive to learning. The administration and staff recognize the potential in each student and support them in their journey toward fulfilling their goals. The school self-evaluation form clearly reflects the school's present practices and the next steps that school leaders plan to take to continue to service the teachers, students and parents well.

The school has created benchmark goals and checkpoints for evaluating its progress. Teachers predict learning targets for individual and most groups of students toward meeting long-term goals. Data analysis of trends informs the revision of practices to ensure there is successful student learning and that goal revision takes place when necessary. Both administrators and staff consistently review formative and summative assessments. They use this data to evaluate the effectiveness of school initiatives and teachers' professional development opportunities to make certain there is alignment with student growth. There are continuous discussions during grade, faculty and observation conferences among classroom teachers, support teachers and the administrators to guarantee student achievement and progress is a school priority. This reflective practice ensures the systemic and ongoing review of plans that leads to cohesive practices throughout the school.

There is an open line of communication with parents regarding students' needs, successes and work habits. Parents express satisfaction with the personal attention the school gives their children. Teachers exhibit a firm but fair attitude that is highly effective in maintaining a sense of direction and purpose for the students. Although 90% of the students do not live in the school neighborhood and require bussing to the school, the administration, faculty and parents work in close collaboration to share information that supports school improvement.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Public School 134	△	➤	✓	+
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, DYO, 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