

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Toussaint L'Overture School

Elementary School 021

**791 Empire Boulevard
Brooklyn
NY 11213**

Principal: Clara Moodie-Kirkland

Dates of review: October 16 - 17, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Christina Lewis

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Toussaint L'Overture is an elementary school with 665 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 91% Black, 6% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 93.9%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 90% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Toussaint L'Overture is a thriving, happy school at the centre of the community it serves. It is very well led by the principal who inspires the whole school community with her commitment to the success and well being of each student. She knows each student by name and is very visible and accessible around the school. As a result, the parents, staff and children feel that the school is like, "a large nurturing family that embraces many different cultures" and "a place where everyone is made to feel special."

The school effectively uses a wide range of data in all subjects to create a picture of the strengths and needs of each student. Long-term and interim goals are set across grades and subjects for individual students. As a result, teachers and students have a clear understanding of what they are working towards. In addition, the small steps provided for students and their families help them to achieve their goals. Student performance is steadily rising, particularly in math and English language arts. However, the school has yet to fully develop systems to track student progress in all subjects, as students move through the school, to ensure that all students make one years progress each year.

The school has developed a good core curriculum in most subjects with strong links between different areas. For example, social studies and English both build on the skills in reading and writing. However, budget limitations mean there is currently little access to some aspects of the arts, particularly music. The school has no art teacher but class teachers compensate for this by holding art focus weeks that include elements of dance and drama as well as visual arts. Examples of this include an underwater theme that covers many cross-curricular skills. The school also arranges many enrichment opportunities through school trips and theatre visits.

Teachers effectively use a wide range of assessment materials and rubrics, providing clear feedback to students on the quality of their work. In some classes, students are being encouraged to evaluate and assess their own work. However, this good practice is not yet consistently used across the school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision for the future development of the school that is shared by the school community.
- The school collects and uses a wide range of data to understand the learning needs of individual students and sets goals to reflect them.
- The achievement and success of the students is the central focus of the whole school community, which is actively involved in each stage of school improvement.
- The school regularly communicates high expectations of behavior, attendance and academic success to students and their families.
- Support services and guidance counselors effectively support the social and emotional need of the students.
- Students are engaged, motivated and enjoy their learning because high-quality instruction makes good use of differentiated activities.
- Staff are reflective and work very well as a team to promote high expectations for the students.

What the school needs to improve

- Build on the work of the inquiry team and improve systems to track student progress in all subjects as they move through the school.
- Identify ways of creating partnerships and community links to ensure students have greater access to music and the arts.
- Develop ways that students can use self-assessment to evaluate their progress towards achieving goals.

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 regularly gathers and analysis a wide range of data in all core subjects. As a result, it has a clear understanding of the needs of individuals and groups of students. Staff members receive this information in a very concise visual way that enables them to plan effectively to meet the different needs of students. Special education students are monitored closely and clear tracking systems linked to individual education plans ensure that the work matches their specific needs. As a result, they make good progress and in some instances are included in mainstream classes. The small group of English language learners is equally well supported by a teacher of English as a second language. Homogeneously grouping higher achieving students in each grade gives these students an opportunity to work at an accelerated pace and receive enrichment activities to extend their learning. Lower achieving students made good progress last year due to the work of the inquiry team. The team identified that some students did not make progress in reading because they did not always grasp the meaning of the text. The team developed strategies to teach these skills. As a result, teachers in all grades have been refining their questioning skills. The school has not yet developed systems to track students' progress effectively as they move from one grade to another and to ensure that all students make one year's progress every year in all subjects.

The school regularly shares Information about progress and attendance with students and their families. The school ensures that this is a two-way dialogue and invites parents to share information about their children's learning needs. As a result, the school has effectively built a strong home-school partnership in which parents feel very involved in 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 well developed.

The school's goals are displayed throughout the school and constantly remind the community what the school is trying to achieve. The school uses data very effectively to set goals for students in all core subjects. These are grade goals, class goals and individual goals. Interim benchmarks are set throughout the year to revise and check progress towards achieving these goals. Teachers plan effective differentiated activities in lessons which ensure the needs of the students are being met. As a result, students are confidently able to articulate their goals and the steps needed to achieve them. In

some of the higher grades, they are encouraged to use self-assessment and develop their own learning plans and goals but this is not yet common practice in all subjects. Weekly conferencing ensures that students are on track to achieve their goals. If they need extra support, then the extended day is flexible in providing necessary catch-up programs. Students at greater risk of not achieving their goals are referred for academic intervention or student counseling. The school regularly informs parents of student progress and school staff work strategically to ensure that there are ongoing conversations about the school's high expectations for students. The school provides a range of workshops for parents to encourage them to actively participate in their children's education.

School leaders have effectively evaluated the previous Comprehensive Education Plan and are in the planning stage for the next cycle of school improvement. This process involves the whole school community and is based on a thorough analysis of data and prioritizing actions for improvement. As a result there is a strong sense of purpose and commitment to school improvement.

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 well developed.

The school has a well-developed curriculum in the core subjects of English language arts, math, science, social studies and physical education that successfully meets the needs of the student population. There are strong links between subjects that emphasize a skills base curriculum encouraging students to become active learners. Because of budget limitations, provision in the arts is limited and currently no music teacher is employed at the school. The school provides dance and art in literacy programs for different groups of students, as well as regular themed arts weeks that are planned though the year. For example, 'Caribbean Life' transformed the school into an island paradise incorporating art, math, science, social studies and dance. In addition, three grades attend 'learn to swim' programs in local community centers. As a student said, "All these activities make learning fun and school a great place to be."

Teachers plan lessons well and include a range of activities differentiated to meet the needs of the learner. As a result, students make good progress and are thoroughly engaged in their learning. The school uses an effective range of assessment systems and rubrics to track students' progress in achieving their learning goals. School leaders ensure that resources are available to assist staff in their instruction. For example, a wide range of reading material that effectively encourages boys to become more engaged in reading.

The school achieves a positive culture of trust and respect between all members of its community by promoting team spirit and working together as a family. The safe supportive environment enables students to achieve well and thrive both personally and academically.

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.

The staff of Toussaint L'Overture work to each other's strengths and, guided by the principal, are reflective and evaluative about their practice. As a result this strong collaboration ensures that improving the outcomes for students is the main focus of everything they do. Teachers have professional development plans that are aligned to individual need and school improvement. The school's leaders regularly monitor the quality of instruction, both formally and informally. The coach and other professionals provide effective support for teachers when needed. Teachers agree that this has improved their practice and they feel valued. Common prep times and grade and subject meetings are scheduled regularly to facilitate discussions about effective practice, to review student work and data, and to share lesson plans. The impact of this reflective and evaluative approach to their work is evident in teachers' classroom practice and the thoroughness in the way lessons are planned to meet the needs of all learners.

The work of the inquiry team has led to action research on developing students' skills in comprehension and getting the 'main idea' of a piece of text. The general feeling of the team was that, because of its work, the target group in reading in grade 4 made progress in the short time the group operated last year. As a result, the team is now developing further strategies to teach this skill, including a focus on reading in the early years. This work has encouraged more teachers to focus on improving student learning by looking more closely at data and understanding the gaps in students' learning. The school has a comprehensive guidance plan that includes internal and external support for students and their families. This effectively supports and enhances the emotional and social development of students particularly those at risk.

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 school development team meets monthly to discuss and review student progress. They effectively evaluate provision and revise as necessary. Teachers meet weekly in grade teams to monitor students' progress. They use a range of assessment data and the results of running records plus conference notes to inform their discussions. As a result of these meetings, teachers revise student goals and modify teaching programs. Additional support is provided by academic intervention services and school guidance counselors for students who need extra support or have emotional issues. Senior instructional staff also ensure that lessons are sufficiently differentiated to ensure student progress at all levels. The leadership team regularly evaluates and monitors progress towards meeting schools goals and adjusts time frames and action plans as required.

The school's leaders effectively use the progress report, quality review, learning environment survey and other external data to evaluate its effectiveness and modify

plans as required. For example, they provided more challenge for high achievers by forming a homogenous class on each grade, enabling students to work at a faster pace. Self-evaluation gives the school an accurate reflection of the effectiveness of its practices and this is an integral part of the school's culture. The school prioritizes areas for improvement and these feed into the next cycle of school development in the Comprehensive Education Plan

The principal has a strong vision for the future success of the school and students that she shares with the school community. She leads by inspiration, commitment, and her belief that students have every opportunity to succeed as responsible citizens of their local and global communities, in a safe, nurturing environment.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Toussaint L'Overture School	△	▷	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed