



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Office of Accountability
2008-2009**

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Elijah G. Stroud

Elementary School 316

**750 Classon Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11238**

Principal: Elif Gure-Perez

Dates of review: March 24 - 25, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Rhonda Hurdle-Taylor

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Elijah G. Stroud is an elementary school with 307 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 91% Black, 7% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 92.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 93% eligibility. This year the school is under new leadership.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

This school is clearly “a neighborhood school” with close links to the community. Students enjoy attending school in a learning environment that celebrates their work and holds high expectations for improving student achievement. The principal has placed strong emphasis on student setting short and long term goals in attendance, student behavior, as well as in all content areas and students are very enthusiastic about meeting these goals. As a result, student attendance has shown improvement in the past two months.

The school leaders recognize the value of having a wide and varied range of assessment data and under their leadership, the inquiry team has led the way in using the data effectively to monitor and review student progress and to arrange appropriate intervention services for students who need it. Teachers meet regularly in collaborative teams to share ideas, plan instruction, and analyze data. As a result, lessons are engaging and designed to meet the needs of lower performing students. There is an existing urgency around providing professional development opportunities for teachers to strengthen and advance their instructional practices. This has resulted in improved student achievement on in-house assessments. Administrators have also made it non-negotiable for teachers to focus on goal setting across all content areas. While teachers work with students to set learning goals, particularly in English language arts, this practice is not yet fully embedded across all content areas and all students are not actively involved in long-term goal setting and self-assessment. Therefore, not all students are able to demonstrate ownership of their learning.

Parents actively support the school and willingly volunteer their services when they can. They are strong in their belief that their children receive a challenging curriculum that extends to after-school activities. They appreciate the consistent opportunities the school gives them to be intricately involved in their child’s learning. As one parent stated, “Our children’s teachers call us often to talk about how they are doing”. Teachers not only communicate regularly with parents about their children’s progress, they also share samples of student work with them. Although feedback to students does not consistently give detailed reasons why they were successful or the next steps for improvement based on specified rubrics, some students are encouraged to reflect on their work and to formulate strategies to achieve their goals. Parents appreciate the fact that teachers nurture their children’s academic, social, and personal development.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The inquiry team has collected and analyzed a wide and varied range of assessment data and teachers use it effectively to review student progress in English language arts and math and plan interventions where appropriate.
- Teachers work effectively in collaborative teams to plan instruction, analyze data, and monitor student progress.
- The principal places a high priority on professional growth and provides opportunities for staff to benefit from varied opportunities to develop strengths as members of a professional learning community.
- The administration, faculty, and parents share high expectations for improving student achievement.
- Students are beginning to set short-term and long-term goals, particularly in English language arts, math, science and social studies as well as for attendance, which they share with parents, to reflect on their work and to devise strategies to achieve them.
- Parents have valuable opportunities to be involved in their child's learning through regular communication with teachers about progress.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that feedback to students about their work consistently gives detailed reasons about what they did well and clear next steps for improvement based on specified rubrics to help them achieve their goals, especially in the area of writing.
- Enable all teachers to develop their practice in negotiating individual student learning goals that define the next steps towards achieving long-term goals and involve students more actively in self-assessment.
- Extend the analysis of assessment data to all content areas to inform goal setting at every level.
- Ensure that teachers challenge all students and extend their learning, particularly special education students and English language learners, by suitably differentiating all lessons.

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.

School leaders and faculty collect and analyze a wide range of data, which informs planning at all levels. Teachers use the results from their data analysis to target students' learning needs as well as to monitor student progress and identify students at-risk of failure. Data gathering and analysis across grades is providing teachers with additional help in their instructional planning and has helped to develop a school-wide practice around student conferencing.

Teachers regularly provide feedback to students during conferencing to help them improve their achievement. The school gives parents information on student progress in the form of formal quarterly report cards during parent/teacher conferences, and teachers also conduct informal meetings with parents and often call them to discuss specific educational issues. This allows parents to provide their children with additional assistance at home to strengthen their academic weaknesses. Teachers' data binders contain a range of assessment data and clearly indicate how teachers use the data to monitor student progress and to base further learning on students' learning outcomes and progress.

Informative hallway bulletin boards on every floor display student work and illustrate the data used to monitor student progress. Outside each classroom students proudly exhibit their personal attendance goals and are happy to share the evidence of their improved attendance. Student portfolios, readily accessible in most classrooms, clearly show student progress in literacy and math and frequently include social studies and science. These student data notebooks contain individual student missions and goals and are a tool to help them organize their learning.

Constant monitoring of lower performing students and students in the special education subgroup allows this school to make good progress as evidenced by results on formative assessments. Procedures are in place to embed this data driven approach in the culture of the school and that it remains central to the manner in which the entire school community functions. Teachers' data binders, student portfolios and in-class teacher charts all demonstrate that the school has well-established data management systems in place. This enables the administrators and staff to have a clear and up-to-date picture of students' performance in all content areas and shows progress for regular and special education students.

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 has developed a collaborative environment where teachers have several opportunities to get together. The staff work together well in their common planning periods, grade meetings, faculty conferences, and in the inquiry team meetings to develop long- and short-term class and whole-school goals. These goals help teachers to focus their instruction and to improve student achievement. The school is in the process of developing teachers’ ability to set individual student learning goals that include interim benchmarks with specific timeframes to track on-going student achievement.

The school developed its Comprehensive Educational Plan through the collaboration of administrators, teachers, and parents. The inquiry team has a strong collective focus on data assessment and goal setting and meets regularly to analyze student data, and set next steps for student learning and suitably high goals for enhancing student learning.

The school uses formative and summative assessment data to set school-wide, grade and class goals in English language arts, science, and math. The school has not extended the analysis of assessment data to inform goal setting at all levels. It is working towards developing teachers’ aptitude towards understanding how to set individual student learning goals that define the next steps in achieving long-term goals. The establishment of individualized short-term goals has not yet become standard practice across the school and as a result, some students are unable to explain succinctly what goals they have to meet to make progress over time. Where teachers are able to set measurable goals, in English language arts for example, student assessment shows progress and teachers are able to effectively monitor and keep track of this progress. Some students speak about the use of rubrics as a tool to judge the quality of their work and can identify specific areas in which they need to improve based on teacher assessment.

The school communicates high academic expectations to students and parents through a variety of avenues. Teachers hold one-on-one student conferences and use this as one way to talk about academic expectations. They frequently contact parents regarding their children’s progress. Monthly meetings, curriculum workshops, breakfast with the principal, newsletters, and parent-teacher conferences are some of the other ways the school keeps parents informed of their children’s academic needs. Parents are very appreciative of the various ways the school maintains contact with them and the manner in which the school conveys its high academic expectations. Additionally, there is an on-going focus on improving student attendance and preventing tardiness and students are involved in creating and keeping track of their attendance goals. However, there is still some fluctuation in attendance.

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.

Treasures Reading Program in English language arts, Everyday Math, and Scott Foresman in science, drive the school’s balanced curriculum. The integration of English language arts, social studies and the arts ensures students’ engagement with their study topics and is evident during lessons. It is also evident that students enjoy their classes. They describe their academics as

“mostly easy” although there is some evidence that students receive appropriate academic challenge. Students are mostly enthusiastic about classes where teachers practical activities, and where there are engaging group activities. There is a clear correlation between effective data analysis and differentiated instruction at all grade levels. After analyzing the results from the first Acuity test the administrative team made a decision to include additional English language arts strategies into the thirty-seven and one half extended daytime. In classes where teachers accurately and effectively practice analyzing their students’ data, differentiated instruction is the norm. One English language arts teacher for example, divides students into color-coded groups and assigns various tasks based on their ability level. While she works with the struggling students, the other two groups are able to work independently. Students are able to explain the reason for the groupings as well as the differentiated tasks. Where teachers do not use this type of approach, lessons do not fully meet students’ academic needs.

Throughout the school, teachers successfully use formative data such as conferencing notes, and diagnostic tests to identify learning outcomes and to group students according to their academic needs. They challenge students at their level and therefore can demonstrate good progress as evidenced by their Acuity, DIBELS, and Fountas and Pinnell assessment results. This is not the case with lower functioning English language learners. They do not receive meaningful work that meets their academic level to ensure their progress.

To nurture the personal growth of students the administrative team has continued the growing relationship with an outside agency that provides counseling and peer mentoring for students. This has improved relationships between families and allows upper grade students to play a more significant role in resolving their own conflicts. However, some teachers still feel the school could do more for students who demonstrate poor behavior.

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 principals fully support the professional development of teachers and provide a range of opportunities and strategies that impact positively on student achievement. Teachers meet regularly in teams to plan together, and to reflect on and share best instructional practices. Faculty conferences focus on the school’s priorities regarding student achievement. This allows all staff members to share the accountability for implementing effective strategies. The administrative team conducts formal and informal classroom observations with a focus on improving instruction. They meet with teachers to share their observations and to give critical feedback on strengths and weaknesses. They have planned increased formal observations as the school works towards differentiated professional development plans for each teacher to allow them to set measurable goals for their own growth within the school learning community. The administrative team plans to use the results from the teacher reflection sheets to enable them to differentiate professional development more precisely.

On a wider level, the principal and one of the assistant principals have capitalized on the inquiry team initiative by empowering the team to become the conduit for sharing data information with their colleagues. Having experienced firsthand the power that data has on impacting on instruction, the inquiry team provides on-going leadership and professional development in gathering, organizing, and analyzing student data using ARIS and Acuity tools. Through classroom inter-visitations, members of the team also share effective instructional strategies

that support their peers in embracing and implementing differentiated instruction. However not all lessons are suitably differentiated to challenge all students, and extend their learning, particularly special education students and English language learners.

The principal values the idea of a strong professional learning community. As a result, teachers' programs include opportunities for them to meet during common planning periods. This allows teachers and administrators to collaborate openly on best instructional practices regarding the appropriate use of data for instructional planning. Additionally, the administrative team's strategic decision to support the work of Partnership with Children, an outside organization that works with the school to provide peer mentoring and counseling for students, is having a positive impact on the students' personal and academic growth and on the school community as a whole.

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 school uses its collection and analysis of data effectively to evaluate and influence organizational decisions. Because of careful and consistent analysis of data, teachers' programs allow them to meet in common planning periods, to work with lead teachers and to visit classrooms of model teachers. In general, teachers work collaboratively to move the school forward with the ultimate goal of improving student learning and providing academic intervention services for students who need it.

School leaders regularly evaluate students' progress. They monitor school goals and constantly adjust curriculum plans in response to any decline in student achievement or progress. The school's self-evaluation form illustrates the reflective nature of the school community and its accuracy in knowing its strengths and areas that need to be improved. It is an effective tool to assess the school in terms of each of the quality statements, where the school needs to go, and the steps needed to get there. The administrative team and the staff systematically evaluate students' progress on an on-going basis. They monitor school goals and adjust curriculum plans in response to any fall in the students' progress or achievement. The administrative team has also instituted a teacher reflection sheet, which allows teachers to give feedback on the professional development they are receiving as well as share their professional development needs. They study teachers' responses to provide the staff with the necessary support.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Elijah G Stroud	△	▷	✓	+
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>	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