



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**Adam Clayton Powell Jr.**

**Elementary School 153  
1750 Amsterdam Avenue  
New York  
NY 10031**

**Principal: Karen Bailey**

**Dates of review: March 16 - 17, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Veronica Yurcik**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Adam Clayton Powell Jr. is an elementary school with 995 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 18% Black, 79% Hispanic, 2% White, and 0.2% Asian students. The student body includes 38% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 92.0%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 89% eligibility.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is well developed.**

What is most significant about Adam Clayton Powell Jr. is its high commitment to its students. Recognized as an outstanding educational establishment in the previous Quality Review, its new principal and the school instructional team have made a seamless transition. They continue to further the school's intense focus on data-driven instruction. The school effectively analyzes data from a multitude of sources, including several of its own well-designed data tools to identify specific subgroup and individual student needs in all core subjects. Teachers successfully use this information to create strategy groupings and to provide differentiated instruction for diverse learning needs, improving student academic outcomes. Supervisors collate data and make on-going adjustments in all school plans; however, cross comparison of content and grade trends are not always consistent. Skillful staffing and budget decisions insure a well-rounded curriculum with a strong enrichment program, which is the pride of the school community. The school effectively uses parent outreach, resulting in informed parents who value the school's focus on data and goal setting in helping their children to succeed.

Teachers use assessment rubrics in all content areas spanning grades K-5, setting clear expectations and providing specific benchmarks. Active adult support for goal setting is a collaborative and on-going reflective process. This support empowers students to make choices and feel confident in achieving their learning goals. Teachers have devised their own creative systems to record and monitor student and class goals appropriate to their grade level. In some classes students complete reflection sheets, monitoring progress of current goals and setting new ones. Classrooms provide print-rich learning environments and plentiful resources; however, opportunities for all students to engage in oral interaction are not always consistent. Supervisory support encourages distributive leadership and collaborative sharing with core inquiry-team members heading teacher teams. Inter- and intra-grade communication and walkthroughs are common practices that strengthen refinement of instruction and learning connections between grades. While many opportunities for professional development are evident, individual teacher professional development plans are not always framed within school-wide goals.

A Maya Angelo quote in the principal's office captures the sense of care and dedication that staff members bring to students: "Pursue the things you love doing and do them so well that people can't take their eyes off you. All other tangible rewards will come as a result." At Adam Clayton Powell Jr., the reward is students who value their learning.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Teachers use assessment rubrics written in student-centered language, setting clear expectations and promoting accurate student self-assessment in all content areas.
- The school has comprehensive data-collection systems that insure on-going monitoring of progress and informed goal revision to meet student-learning needs.
- The school has numerous embedded practices that promote collaborative inquiry into understanding individual learners' needs.
- Teachers effectively form small-group strategy instruction based on careful review of interim assessments and school-data tools, identifying needs of all student subgroups.
- Supervisory focused support, trust and respect for staff members have created genuine distributive leadership, resulting in teachers leading teams of other teachers in the study of professional practice.
- Staffing and budget decisions support special classroom programs that allow differentiated instruction, enabling students to reach their goals.
- The school's effective outreach to parents results in very high parent satisfaction, understanding, and support of the school's data initiative to improve students' learning goals.

### What the school needs to improve

- Build on the school's individual teacher professional development plans to strengthen alignment with school-wide goals and link more closely with student performance outcomes.
- Ensure that classroom instruction and learning activities provide ample opportunities for increased verbal interaction among students, so that all students are actively engaged in strengthening vocabulary and oral expression.
- Continue to review and monitor cross-comparison of content and grade trends to strengthen the on-going goal modification of all school plans.

## 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.**

Consistency, reflection, and on-going adjustment characterize the school's highly organized approach to using data. The school publishes a schedule for frequent collection of its numerous and high quality self-designed data tools. These tools promote on-going critical evaluation of progress toward goal achievement in all core subjects. The principal describes their "Class Balanced Scorecard" as the tool "which really moves our school". This tool provides a succinct and thoughtful representation of a multitude of factors influencing student achievement. Collected several times yearly, it disaggregates student performance and progress data and illuminates data such as social-emotional support, student and teacher attendance, and parent outreach. Teachers use ARIS and the school's "Data Trends" tool effectively to identify needs and trends within student subgroups. Teachers state that these assessment tools make them aware of subgroup movement and cause them to ask themselves how they can get a group to be more successful.

Teachers and supervisors effectively review frequent administration of end-of-unit assessments, running records and developmental reading assessment results. This systematic data collection and review, in all core subjects, contributes to informed decision-making in planning differentiated instruction. Data analysis also leads to more timely intervention for students and focused study at professional development team meetings. As a result, students demonstrate significant progress in making a year's academic growth, or more, between grades.

The school sends a monthly curriculum map and progress report to parents detailing goal achievement in reading, writing, math, social studies, science, social skills, progress toward reading benchmarks, and suggestions for further work. This has resulted in parents feeling more informed and better able to assist their children in next steps toward goal achievement.

**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 does an excellent job in focusing on data to achieve learning goals through its well-defined practices of collaborative inquiry and communication. Among these practices are weekly scheduled teacher meetings, monthly instructional walkthroughs by teachers and parents, published assessment schedules, and target dates for goal attainment. The strong sharing between teachers, coaches and supervisors contributes to on-going rigorous setting of measurable interim and long-term goals and strategy intervention. Tools, such as the school "Planning to Succeed" template, prepared by

teachers, outline benchmark goals and specific instructional strategies to reach those goals, which insures differentiation to meet learner needs. Tier performance update sheets, in all content areas, help teachers continually sort students to provide targeted instruction. Colleague-to-colleague support helps teachers review school and standardized tools, such as the periodic assessments, to set benchmark goals and monitor progress throughout the year.

Teachers set clear expectations for learning and promote accurate students' self-assessment in all content areas by using assessment rubrics written in student-centered language. All student work demonstrates the consistent use of rubrics. Students express that these tools are helpful to them saying that rubrics "show you how you can get better", "how good you are", "what level you are on", and, "what you need help on". Because of the comprehensive use of rubrics, students better understand expectations and can state personal academic goals.

The school's Comprehensive Educational Plan is an inclusive joint venture, with each constituency contributing to the writing. It is strategically modified in consultation with the school leadership team and instructional support staff. The school is currently revising last year's Comprehensive Educational Plan to strengthen action plans.

School leaders and staff very effectively convey high expectations for student attendance and academic achievement by clearly outlining parental support needed and the process of working toward individual goals. Since the parent coordinator is part of the schools' instructional team, she is very well versed in the school's mission and plans, enabling her to share accurately those plans at parent workshops. The parents describe a wide variety of communication avenues the school uses to keep them informed. They are particularly grateful that teachers personally contact them when their children meet benchmark goals and share next steps with them.

**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's highly reflective approach is evidenced in the depth and breadth of its well-rounded instructional program matched to State standards. Reading and writing skills are integral in content-area science and social studies instruction. This interdisciplinary learning provides rich meaningful contexts that support students' thinking and written expression. The use of content and skill-specific rubrics, for all student projects and written reports, clearly sets expectations and promotes student self-evaluation in determining next learning steps. School leaders maximize opportunities for students to enjoy challenging and engaging curriculum experiences by carefully matching student needs when making placement decisions. Several available class programs include a dual-language academy offering Spanish and English instruction; an arts academy offering additional hours of arts instruction; collaborative team teaching for general and special education students; and classes emphasizing English acquisition skills.

The school provides a greatly diversified enrichment program, during and after school hours, for grades 2-5 students to pursue their interests and develop creative skills. Offerings include a full complement of art genres, thinking games such as chess, and sports activities. The highly scaffolded academic support, coupled with enrichment opportunities, leads to on-going skill attainment. Comprehensive academic support and

enrichment activities build self-confidence, making school fun and motivating students toward success. Students describe their school as “paradise” and as “perfect”.

Strategic staffing, scheduling and budget decisions support school-wide learning goals. New hires are English as a second language certified, to insure support of the school’s growing English language learner population. The school has a full complement of literacy, math, differentiation and dual language coaches. They provide the necessary support for the intensive work needed to achieve well thought-out and student-specific goal setting. Teachers are purposeful in planning and providing differentiated instruction to successfully meet learning needs and engage students. Student interaction is evident in classrooms; however, opportunities for student “accountable talk”, to promote language development, are not always harnessed in ways to maximize full engagement of some students.

Teachers and supervisors speak about students and parents with respect and, in turn, students and parents express respect and trust in staff. This positive energy translates into students who express a desire to succeed and a confidence in their teachers and themselves, which is evident in their significant academic and personal progress. As one student explained, “My teacher always says, ‘The sky is the limit’.”

**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.**

Teachers speak appreciatively about how the principal and supervisors personally encourage them and have helped them to move “from wanting to become teacher leaders to becoming teacher leaders”. This has empowered teachers to take risks and develop new curricular projects, suggest new school-wide initiatives and lead their colleagues in inquiry study. As a result, one teacher entered into a project with Park Rangers and her class worked with an artist to design the landscape for a nearby public park. A technology and science fair is in the works, as well as a future technology academy based on teacher suggestions. Teachers from the core inquiry team lead five inquiry teams. Innovative work, such as developing a standards-based math assessment for first graders and teaming between a first and fifth grade to provide phonics instruction to fifth grade English language learners, has led to improved student achievement for targeted students.

Teacher learning and improvement are cultural norms and very evident in the way teachers work closely together and support each other. Teachers state that they “have built capacity” by “reaching out to colleagues”. Experienced teachers provide much support to new teachers and welcome them into their classrooms, which accounts for the quick assimilation of new teachers. A new teacher described support from her mentor as “amazing”. Well thought-out scheduling, coupled with supportive teacher coaches and supervisors, insures scheduled weekly meetings for staff to study together, share resources and plan intervisitations. Walk-through participants receive detailed information sheets to guide them in gathering evidence to determine what is being taught and how to judge quality. These walk-throughs maximize learning through in-depth investigation into habits of mind of students and teachers, such as thinking about your thinking, listening with empathy and striving for accuracy. Teachers benefit from written evidence feedback, which fosters reflective practice, insuring that content learning and positive attitudes are nurtured in helping students achieve. Because of walkthrough observations, the school improved explicit goal setting and implemented

new core science and social studies curriculums. The school is committed to differentiating support for teachers' professional development and honoring specific teacher requests. The administration has implemented a new system whereby each teacher has an individual professional development plan. The school has yet to fully align individual professional development plans with school-wide goals linked to student performance outcomes.

Several full-time guidance counselors, an active parent coordinator, and alliances with several community-based organizations provide comprehensive health and social-emotional support systems for students and their parents. One outcome is improved attendance supported by weekly investigations and follow-up by the school attendance team, as well as home visits by one of the community based organizations.

**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.**

School leaders continually use data as the vehicle toward school improvement. They recognize the value of the community's perceptions through thoughtful responsiveness to key documents. In order to explore issues of concern better, the school increased safety meetings to twice a month in response to parent interest expressed in the Learning Environment Survey Report regarding safety. Numerous systems are in place for on-going monitoring of student achievement such as through evaluation by scheduling regular data-collection periods. Regular collection and review allow for adjustment in content, teaching strategies, and goal setting in order to improve student achievement. Established follow-up practices, which include supervisor and coach review of teacher data submissions, allow for regular teacher feedback. This helps teachers to continually assess their students' progress against set interim benchmarks and long-term goals. School leaders and teachers take action, based on their on-going reflection and monitoring, making timely modifications including implementing an action plan to improve student reading achievement. Cross-comparison of content and grade trends is not always evident. However, structures are in place, such as inquiry teams and cross-grade meetings, which support continued learning in identifying trends, which may define areas for school-wide instructional modification.

The principal describes the school's Progress Report as "quite meaningful" in helping parents understand what progress looks like on an on-going basis. The school conducted detailed analysis of that report and the State yearly progress goals, to target individual students. They examined practices that contributed to receiving extra credit for all subgroups identified in the City Progress Report. As a result, this year, the school increased mainstreaming of special education students to support their continued high-level achievement. The school's self-evaluation accurately describes the school and its myriad of structures that promote reflection. All constituents express common goals, testifying to explicit communication and a clear vision for the future.

## School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: Adam Clayton Powell Jr.</b>	△	▷	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>				<b>X</b>
<b>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.</b>				
<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?				<b>X</b>
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				<b>X</b>
<b>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.</b>				
<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?				<b>X</b>
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				<b>X</b>

### 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, DYQ, 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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				<b>X</b>

**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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				<b>X</b>

**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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				<b>X</b>

<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>