

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**Public School 029**

**Elementary School 029**

**125-10 23 Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11356**

**Principal: Jamie Adams**

**Dates of review: October 21 - 22, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Bruce Berry**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Public School 029 is an elementary school with 648 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 46% Hispanic, 18% White, and 34% Asian students. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 94.5%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 63% eligibility.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

The principal and staff of Public School 29 create a wonderfully calm and caring environment where students are happy and interested learners. It has developed excellent computerized systems for recording and analyzing data to monitor the progress students are making. However, the system is not yet used to monitor progress in some of the core curriculum areas. The curriculum and enrichment activities create a wide range of exciting learning opportunities for students. This includes a successful arts program, together with initiatives to develop the students' academic, cultural and social awareness. Teachers work collaboratively to plan the curriculum and ensure that instruction provides engagement and interest for student learning. However, not all instruction provides differentiated activities to match some students' achievement levels or set to accelerate the pace of learning sufficiently.

There are excellent communications with parents to keep them fully updated on their children's progress and to enable them to be fully involved in all aspects of the work of the school. A large number of parents volunteer their services to help with in-school activities, as well as trips and school functions. The school provides many opportunities for parents to be learners in order to assist their children at home. Parents have high praise for the dedication of the staff and for the quality of the education and care their children receive in school.

The school develops useful whole school plans and goals in order to improve student learning and achievement. These improvement goals do not yet extend to every core subject area and are not sufficiently challenging to increase student achievement levels. Most teachers use data successfully to create informative goals to help students understand their next learning steps. The system for setting learning goals is not yet sufficiently formalized to enable all students and parents to be fully engaged in the process. The school demonstrates a high capacity for collaboratively continuing the process of change required for improving student achievement. It has the full engagement and support of the students and their parents in bringing about that improvement.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The calm, respectful and caring school culture provides an inspiring and safe environment for learning.
- The principal and staff work collaboratively to create a wide range of exciting curriculum, enrichment and social learning opportunities for the students.
- The teachers work effectively in grade and subject teams to plan their curriculum and instruction and to regularly review student progress.
- The school's excellent data systems are used well in some core subjects to regularly monitor student achievement and provide support and intervention programs where a need is identified.
- The effective and regular communications with parents keeps them fully informed of their children's progress and the broad curriculum goals for each unit of work in some core subjects.
- The parents have great praise and respect of the administration and teachers who provide good opportunities for them to be participative partners in their children's education.

### What the school needs to improve

- Expand the school's excellent data system to provide effective student progress monitoring in other core subject areas not yet covered.
- Develop the setting of whole school improvement goals in all subjects to extend challenging yet attainable growth based on the students' present achievement levels.
- Formalize a system to extend the use of learning goals to cover all core subjects and ensure that these are understood by students and shared with parents.
- Improve the consistency in the use of learning objectives and the differentiation of activities to provide challenge matched to the students' achievement levels in order to accelerate the pace of learning.

## 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.**

The school has a sophisticated data tracking system, which is used well in English language arts, math and science to provide teachers with useful reports on the progress of individuals and groups of students. Teachers get valuable information on specific skills in need of improvement for all students in order to provide support and intervention programs. Annual test data is analyzed to create benchmark information for each student and to review trends in the performance of classrooms, grades, subjects and subgroups. For example, data revealed that female Hispanic students were not making sufficient progress in science and math. As a result, this is now a major focus for the inquiry team research. The school is not yet consistently collecting and analyzing data for other core subject areas. There are very good systems in place for supporting special education and English language learners and, as a result, these students make very good progress in their achievement levels.

The school has excellent communication systems to keep parents fully informed of their children's progress, learning goals and school events. Monthly letters and the school's website give parents detailed information on the broad curriculum goals for the next month. Many teachers provide parents with information about their child's learning and ways in which they can help them to improve. This level of effective communication has resulted in far more parents being involved in the instructional programs, increased attendance at curriculum events and a doubling of the responses to the Learning Environment Survey.

**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 sets differentiated goals for improving student achievement in English language arts, math and science. However, in other core subjects there is not always sufficient challenge, and attainable growth when measured against the students' present achievement levels because these goals are not so well defined. Learning goals play an important part in helping students and parents to understand the next steps of learning. Teachers regularly conference with the students and agree the specific areas for improvement for them to work on. The principal meets with teachers monthly to review the progress of the students in reaching their goals where set and agrees interventions where a need is identified.

A good feature is that teachers and parents are fully involved in the development of plans and goals for the school's Comprehensive Education Plan. A group of teachers reviews the previous plans and goals and generates plans for the future. These are effectively shared with grade teams to get their input and ideas. Regular reviews of the impact of the plans and goals take place through the various grade and subject meetings. Teachers meet with parents and students to review student progress and learning goal outcomes. The high expectations are wonderfully demonstrated by the high attendance levels and excellent student behavior and engagement in classrooms. It is also seen in the colorful celebrations of student work that adorn all parts of 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.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school has a wide, varied and exciting range of curriculum opportunities to generate high levels of interest and engagement for student learning. It is aligned to State standards and the programs and assessment practices are used effectively for planning instruction and interventions. Some highly effective differentiated small group work takes place every morning where students work on specific identified skills in need of further improvement. Enrichment curriculum opportunities are provided within and beyond the school day. Music appreciation is a valuable component of the school curriculum for all. This is further enhanced by opportunities for students to be involved in chorus, music, dance, art and ballet. The after school cultural theater and arts program allows students to learn to play stringed and percussion instruments. Effective differentiated instruction and learning activities are in evidence in some classrooms, where students work well together on activities matched to their achievement levels. In such instances, this instruction provides them with increased pace and deeper understanding in their learning. However, there is not yet a consistent approach to the use of individualized learning objectives and differentiated activities in some classrooms to ensure that the tasks are matched to the students' achievement levels and which provide sufficient pace to maximise their progress.

The budget is used creatively to support the curriculum, instruction and to resource the school to a high level. When the school's Progress Report revealed a need for more challenging resources in math for higher-level students the principal purchased exemplars and interactive technology programs in order to increase the pace of student progress. The budget is also used effectively to support the arts, provide professional development coaching and to enhance the use of technology throughout the school. The principal and teachers create a calm, respectful and caring environment in which students feel safe and are fully engaged and interested in their learning.

**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.**

Regular classroom walkthroughs provide valuable information for senior leaders on the impact instruction has on student learning. They undertake effective reviews of student progress using useful reports on how well students are learning generated from the school's data. Teachers have many valuable opportunities to work together to plan their curriculum and instruction through regular common planning time and data meetings. The inquiry team is focusing its research well on the lower achieving students in math who did not make one year of progress the previous year by monitoring the improvement students make by pre- and post-unit unit math assessments analysis.

The principal holds regular meetings to evaluate the professional development goals for each teacher and make necessary adjustments to the school's professional development plan to support their individual needs. This is enhanced by the support of the school's coaches, who provide individualized help for identified training needs, as well as weekly demonstration lessons. Teachers have valuable opportunities to be proactive learners in the study groups organized by the Teachers College professional developer and in regular lunch and learn sessions. New teachers receive excellent support through the school's mentoring program and the monthly "dessert and discussion" sessions with the principal. The school's youth development director and guidance counselor deliver an excellent character development program. Students in grades 3 through 5 are able to extend their life experiences through the excellent outreach community work program. Monthly workshops provide good learning opportunities to engage parents as active partners in their children's education.

**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.**

Senior leaders use data well to monitor and evaluate the impact of the school's plans and goals and to make adjustments where necessary. The Comprehensive Education Plan is presently in the process of being redeveloped. The previous plan has specific and measurable goals for improving student achievement in English language arts, math and science. Such detailed goals for raising achievement are not yet established in other core areas but timeframes are in place that are used to evaluate progress towards these longer-term goals in some subjects. A full review has revealed the school did not meet its science goals unlike the success seen in English language arts and math. This has led to a helpful review of the instruction and assessment procedures in science. Regular effective checks take place throughout the year to monitor the achievement levels and progress of individual, groups and subgroups of students. School leaders successfully evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction and make organizational modifications on the basis of their findings. For example, a major investment in math resources was made following an evaluation of the outcomes of the school's recent Progress Report. The school has very good organizational structures in place to successfully realize its vision for continually improving student achievement.

# School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: Public School 029</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+
<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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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, 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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X	

**Quality Review Scoring Key**

△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed
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