



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**Public School 106**

**Elementary School 106**

**180 Beach 35 Street  
Queens  
NY 11691**

**Principal: Marcella Sills**

**Dates of review: February 2 - 3, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Nancy Birson**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Public School 106 is an elementary school with 413 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 80% Black, 11% Hispanic, 4% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 92.0%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 79% eligibility.

### Overall Evaluation

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

The principal has studied a variety of key data related to the school's academic performance and the school community's satisfaction. As a result, she has implemented changes that have had a positive impact on student performance and on the overall satisfaction with the school through improved teacher collaboration. The school continues to expand its systems for inclusion of more members of the school community in decision-making. Many constituents speak of this year as a "good year". There is renewed determination to undertake the continuing challenges ahead as teachers, parents and students speak highly of the possibilities for interdisciplinary connections in the Core Knowledge curriculum as they gain further familiarity with its implementation.

The availability of additional data from the New York City Department of Education's periodic assessments has provided the school with the opportunity to expand its student portfolios. The school utilizes this, and other student work, to determine student strengths and needs and assist students in setting long-term goals. Teachers use data to inform students and parents of student standings in most content areas using monthly progress reports and newly implemented action plans/goals reports for students in the lowest third in academic achievement. Students and parents are not always clear on the specific long-term goals they must accomplish and as a result, cannot always clearly articulate the next learning steps.

As a goal this year, the school has undertaken to increase teaching capacity and improve student outcomes using differentiated instructional practices. The school has made a commitment to technology hardware in most classrooms to improve student engagement. There has been more widespread implementation of differentiation and the school continues to deepen its understanding of the practice. However, teachers do not yet consistently use differentiation across the content areas or as a response to data to enable students with diverse abilities to perform at different levels of complexity. Staff do not fully understand the expectations for all school plans due to the lack of measurable interim goals. There is appreciation by all school constituents of the changes to curriculum and collaboration thus far. Students, in particular, express appreciation for their "new way of learning".

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school utilizes a wide range of data to determine the learning goals for students as well as to evaluate progress.
- The principal used data to make strategic, organizational decisions that had a positive impact on student learning outcomes.
- The school curriculum places a strong emphasis on interdisciplinary connections.
- The school has successfully implemented a more regular practice of communicating student progress in most subject areas on a monthly basis.
- The school has expanded opportunities for teachers to collaborate and share decision-making thereby capturing reserves of expertise in the school.
- The administration provides effective leadership resulting in a collegial environment.

### What the school needs to improve

- Further develop the process of setting specific, rigorous long-term goals and enable students to understand what they need to do and know in order to achieve the goals set.
- Continue to develop communication systems to foster engagement on issues that matter to the entire school community.
- Accelerate the training for teachers in using data diagnostically, to plan for differentiated instruction and embed the use of technology.
- Set rigorous and measurable interim goals for all the school's plans and instructional practices to establish clear expectations.

## 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 gathers a broad range of summative and formative data. Leaders analyze and share this data with relevant staff, which enables teachers to determine learning goals as well as to evaluate progress for individual students. School leaders and faculty analyze patterns and trends in subgroup performance and progress in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies so that they can implement decisions regarding academic and affective supports in a flexible and timely manner.

Periodic assessments are made part of a newly instituted "action plan/goals report" for targeted students in some of the content areas. The report provides the students and their families with up-to-date information on classroom interventions and recommendations for assistance at home. Teachers' data binders and student assessment portfolios are kept current with periodic assessments, teacher-made assessments and student work. The school has a system for delivering these student portfolios to the subsequent grade teachers. This provides continuity in information around student data and enables the school to make decisions regarding academic interventions, and needs-based groupings early on in the school year. Teachers provide families with monthly progress reports that indicate individual students' performance levels in some content areas, behavior assessment, as well as status of homework assignments. Some families utilize these reports to contact the school for clarification or ideas on how to assist their children.

In addition to open school nights and parent teacher conferences, the school holds periodic workshops for families on school initiatives, what student scores indicate and expectations for their children. While the school has an effective system for gathering and disseminating data, the information provided is grounded in skills' achievement. As a result, students and families are not always able to articulate specific, next steps in their 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 proficient.**

The school has different structures such as grade level common preparatory periods and grade level meetings to support its practice of setting goals for all students. The classroom teachers and support staff meet during these weekly sessions and collaborate on data analysis and lesson planning. Teachers, this year, feel supported in sharing data with colleagues. Data analysis of targeted students leads to student goal

setting by some teachers while other teachers extend the process to implement strategies to meet those established goals. This practice is new to the school. The school has not yet formalized collaboration amongst teachers after the instructional strategies have been implemented to determine if the instructional strategies have supported students in meeting their goals.

Teachers update student data portfolios with information culled from running records, periodic assessments and conference notes. The portfolios are used to generate monthly progress reports to parents. These communicate the school's high expectations regarding academic progress, behavior and attendance. The administration and teachers review the progress of individual students and sub-groups on a monthly basis. While the school has begun to analyze its curriculum because of this review, the modifications to the curriculum are insufficient to address student learning goals for all students in all core subjects.

The school has implemented the 4-Square writing model in kindergarten through grade 5 in recognition of the central role of writing in its curriculum. This has resulted in cross-curricular writing that is evident in classrooms and in hallway bulletin boards. The model has assisted in providing students with scaffolded support built around a simple graphic organizer that shows students how to collect ideas, add supporting details and connecting words and incorporate vivid language. This has resulted in copious amounts of writing in most content areas that meets performance indicators for organizational format to develop ideas. Current teacher feedback to students does not yet consistently help all students to understand and monitor their own learning goals.

**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 moved from its introductory phase to implementation of the Core Knowledge curriculum. The implementation and alignment of State standards to the Core Knowledge Sequence has, in every grade level each year, led to an increase in the overall percentage of students scoring at proficiency and above in English language arts. This common curriculum has enabled teachers to collaborate and share and prepare lessons that provide carefully sequenced knowledge in which to ground skills instruction. The principal has plans to conduct a study group for accountable talk in the math classroom in order to enhance teacher planning to further engage students in their learning. While the school presently examines assessment results in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies to group or regroup students, staff do not test and refine lessons regularly to adjust or improve instruction based on these results. Consequently, the needs of the lowest and highest achieving students are not always met in all core subjects. Deeper understanding and application of differentiation by providing supplemental or leveled materials at varying degrees of difficulty, offering multi-option assignments, student self-selections or the creation of simplified or extension activities, based on student assessment data has not as yet been consistently applied. This results in mostly whole-class lessons in some classrooms based on the same activity or in content that students feel they have already mastered.

The school has committed resources and made various strategic decisions in order to support students' learning goals. One is placing additional push-in staff, where necessary, to support the needs of English language learners and special education

students. Another is the placement of SMART board hardware in many classrooms. The efficacy and optimal use of these resources is not always measured so the value of added expenditure in relation to the expectations around their use is not clear to all staff.

The principal has instituted various practices to engender support and collaboration that has led to an environment of mutual trust and respect. The establishment of grade level meetings at the same time every day, as well as of sub-inquiry groups on each grade level, has provided teachers with a forum within which to seek out the assistance of colleagues. This has greatly enhanced teachers' social commitment and energies. One teacher commented, "There is positivity in the building".

**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 school places very high importance on teacher development and growth. In response to various inputs, the school has provided professional development geared to a myriad of needs and abilities. It facilitates or offers workshops on Core Knowledge, periodic assessments, test preparation, social studies and science workshops, as well as any needs identified from teacher surveys. Some of these professional development activities have resulted in teachers having more confidence when addressing parents and students as to areas of strength and need. Teachers feel more comfortable accessing the instructional resources and item bank assessments provided by the New York City periodic assessment tools, leading to improved academic outcomes for struggling students.

As a result of last year's Quality Review recommendation, and analysis of student data, the school has committed this year to examining and strengthening differentiation of instructional practice. Most classroom teachers are implementing differentiation through small group work, cooperative groups, learning centers, and visuals. The principal has committed to a web-based observation program that assists her in providing quick email feedback to teachers using specific criteria for the content areas. It has not yet been determined how this new feedback tool will assist in monitoring the performance of teachers as related to school-wide goals or improved student outcomes.

The school has expanded the inquiry team this year to sub-inquiry teams that are comprised of classroom teachers. The work of the teams has led to increased use of data and action plans for targeted students. This has enabled teachers to use short-term assessment results as the basis for improvement in student outcomes at the class level.

**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 principal is clear in her vision for the school and its future development. She is open to new ideas and is constantly seeking ways to improve student outcomes. Her steadfastness and non-negotiable stance amidst initial resistance has served students and teachers well. The school's prior mission statement has been revised with school

community input. Not all staff are able to articulate the school's goals linked to its mission. There is some understanding that they are to differentiate instruction but they are not all aware of where they are on a continuum of practice.

The Comprehensive Educational Plan focuses on some of the variables that are clearly linked to the most important strategies for the school. School leaders and faculty use data from the progress report, quality review, learning environment survey, inquiry team findings and interim assessments to determine the effectiveness of organizational decisions against the plan. The school has set quarterly interim time frames for some of its school plans. This has established an expectation that long-term school plans will be reviewed. Professional development plans are adjusted based on information from these sources. The school has aligned its professional development opportunities by adding workshops during the school year and plans for a summer retreat. Students, teachers and parents express that there is a viable curriculum that is responsive to their needs around depth of knowledge and extension through arts and technology.

Teachers assess students in most content areas and monitor progress on a monthly basis. They utilize individual laptops in order to access data in a direct, timely manner. The administration and faculty use monthly meetings to then examine individual student, subgroup and grade level data. This has led to decisions that serve to revise student learning plans as well as student groupings and interventions.

# School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: Public School 106</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>			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	
<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>	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>			X	

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