



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Public School 037

Early Childhood - High School 037

**15 Fairfield Street
Staten Island
NY 10308**

Principal: William Fiorelli

Dates of review: March 10 - 12, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Corinne Brown

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 37 is an early childhood-high school with 299 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 10% Black, 19% Hispanic, 67% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 78% of the students enrolled and girls account for 22%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 91.3%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

This District 75 special school is located on Staten Island at a main site, four general education inclusion sites and an annex for middle and high school students with autism, who attend 14 work sites across the island. The main site and annex are barrier free. The majority of students follow alternate assessment programs, with 2% following standardized assessment courses.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Public School 37 offers a warm welcome to this nurturing environment where smiles abound. One parent summed up the views of many, saying, "They've done so much here. My son is 20 now; I wish he could stay till he was 40." Staff and leaders know students as individuals with unique personalities and capabilities. As a result, they sensitively use data, in tandem with an understanding of students' preferences and difficulties, to help students grow socially, functionally and academically. The staff provides continuity, structure and security for students so they are safe as they are helped to work to become independent. The school continually evolves as it seeks varied ways to reach students. Leaders and teachers gather data to understand student and school performance, harnessing different tools to drill down in their analysis. In this way, they note anomalies in performance and progress to inform interventions and adjustment to programs. Teachers modify and adapt the curriculum according to students' needs using valuable practical and multi-sensory approaches. The students' individual education plans drive all instructional decisions. The quality of goals within these plans varies. In keeping with other goals across the school, the interim checkpoints are not always sufficiently detailed to allow robust monitoring of progress. Lessons engage students through varied ways of experiencing success, including educational visits, trips and worksite learning. Not all lessons consistently move students' understanding and skills along at their level and with sufficient pace. Staff rightly offer frequent supportive encouragement to students. Administrators recognize the benefits of reinforcing for students why they have been successful when praising them.

Leaders and teachers have begun to use a common lens for promoting professional growth. As yet, teachers have not formalized individual growth plans informed by focused lesson observations and collaborative discussion. Teachers, paraprofessionals and related service providers work closely together to provide cohesive support for students and their families. However, their frequent communication with families does not consistently inform parents how they can support achievement of student goals at home. The strong parent-teacher association reflects many parents' active involvement. The cohesive community works together well in promoting students' holistic growth.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Personal interactions in the school are characterized by warm trust, respect and a belief in the achievable for the individual, reflecting the calm and considerate tone set by the principal.
- Students make progress toward independence, especially in functional life skills, as a result of varied programs tailored to service categories, and through the support of committed instructors and paraprofessionals.
- Dedicated teachers and related service providers plan together and deliver integrated instruction that is suitably adapted to facilitate equal access for all students to the relevant curriculum, enhanced by beneficial partnerships.
- Teachers and leaders gather and analyze a range of relevant data, customizing and refining tools, to capture a picture of individual and whole school performance and progress, using it to inform planning for future development.
- The school welcomes parents as active participants in their child's learning, so routinely shares ongoing information about achievement.
- The mutually supportive leaders and staff collegially share expertise in seeking to continually improve through formal and informal professional development opportunities, always with students' best interests in mind.

What the school needs to improve

- Sharpen goal and target setting across the school to ensure precise monitoring detail leads to robust evaluation of progress toward goals at specified intervals.
- Formalize teachers' individual growth plans collaboratively, based on data including lesson observations rooted in a shared professional language, to enable analysis of the impact of professional development on instruction and student outcomes.
- Refine the frequent communication with parents to consistently reference goals and next steps so that parents support progress toward students' goals at home, and explore ways to strengthen students' ownership of learning.
- Ensure that all lessons consistently accelerate individual student's learning by modifying tasks and pace, with positive feedback that reinforces why students have been successful.

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.

Teachers and related service providers usefully gather a range of formative and summative data relevant to students' service categories at regular intervals through varied assessments. In addition, with assistance from paraprofessionals, teachers collect ongoing daily information on data tracking sheets regarding social, functional, behavioral and academic skills. Individual student binders mean that all information about a student, including the individual education plan, is readily accessible for staff and parents. In this way, receiving teachers at the start of the year have an immediate picture of the capabilities of each student. The data specialist collates all this information and valuably generates reports for leaders and staff. This means that the administration in particular analyses information by service category, site, class, subject and various subgroups within the student population. Leaders share findings with staff, tracking particular groups such as the oldest students in the annex and their skills acquisition, or pre-kindergarten students who are aging out to kindergarten. As a result, leaders have a current focus on those students who made little progress against the goals within their individual education plans. Leaders recognize the value of regularly revisiting subgroups by gender and of looking within broad ethnic categories to observe patterns or trends. They note that over 6% of students moved to less restrictive environments, or classes with a higher ratio of students to staff, because of the school's programs. Examining baseline assessment data leaders and faculty noticed inadequate precision of detail regarding students' skills and sub-skills. Consequently, the school developed *The PS37R Scale of Skills*, which it uses with the *Hawaii Early Learning Profile*, to valuably supplement *Brigance* baseline information. Leaders also compare results and findings about New York State Alternate Assessment results with two other District 75 schools to share best practices.

Teachers send formal reports to parents four times over the full twelve month school period. In addition, they exchange information daily through the communication book and information sheets, including details on feeding requirements and behaviors. Related service providers similarly keep parents valuably informed. Personal contact notably supplements parent-teacher conferences and individual meetings.

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 students' individual education plan underpins all aspects of the school's work and informs ongoing planning and revision. Classroom teachers and related service

providers collaborate with parents to devise meaningful goals for the individual student, with interim indicators that measure progress. Weekly cohort common planning sessions mean that teachers and related service providers work together to plan integrated instruction as indicated by the students' individual education plan. These professionals use their expertise to focus carefully on the required aspect of the student's development within the context of planning for a small class group, or for individual push-in or pullout sessions according to need. Teachers and administrators work carefully to plan transition for older students. As a result, last year all aging-out students moved to suitable placements. The Comprehensive Educational Plan rightly references students' service category needs as identified through data analysis and results from ongoing active involvement of the school leadership team in school life.

With free-flowing communication channels between home and school, staff share ongoing information with parents about students' achievement. Because they elicit information from home, staff incorporate students' preferences and specific requirements when planning, such as physical needs and food choices. Many parents are highly involved with their child's learning and development. However, staff communication with home does not consistently explain students' next steps, or advice on reinforcing these at home. Within classrooms, students receive clear instructions, but staff do not routinely relate these to short- or long-term goals so that students can begin to generalize and carry skills over to other situations, depending on their cognitive development. Leaders and staff share high expectations that students can, and will, make progress. This encouragement is explicit for the school community, including through the prominent display of the school's mission statement and general goals for students in the entrance hallway. Through shopping trips to supermarkets and other real-life situations, teachers enhance parents' understanding of students' capabilities. The school operates robust attendance procedures, with first day calls, as student attendance and safety is paramount.

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.

As functional life skills or activities of daily living are correctly of particular importance for the school's student populations, the move toward therapeutic collaborative classrooms visibly benefits students. Adults in the classroom work with students to deliver the relevant curriculum, adapted to students' needs, so that all students can participate. In this way, planned sessions such as home economics or the instructional lunch program, successfully interweave social, functional, math, communication and literacy skills. Older students' reinforce life skills through worksite participation or in-house activities such as gardening. Varied methodologies, structures and curriculum cater suitably for different service categories of both standardized and alternate assessment students. As a result, students make progress towards independence, particularly in functional life skills. One parent commented that her son is "60% more verbal here than he was last year in another school." The school pilots programs to enhance students' experience and assess the impact on their learning. In this way, *Get Ready to Learn* starts the day with a multi-sensory, relaxing session that includes song, movement, smell and touch within a supportive, structured environment. Teachers harness research-based methods to cater for students' needs, so carefully plan with paraprofessionals and related service providers. Accordingly, different classrooms skillfully utilize varied methods to facilitate

students' access, participation and communication, including symbols, pictures, signs, communication devices and physical adaptations. However, some lessons do not modify tasks sufficiently to fully meet the individual student's needs. There are missed opportunities for learning through too much "wait time," or too fast a pace for the individual to complete the given task. Although staff are rightly encouraging and positive with students, verbal praise frequently gives inadequate reason why the student has been successful.

Students enjoy being in this peaceful, secure environment, as do parents and visitors. Adults treat students with dignity and value their individual personalities. One parent correctly encapsulated the warmth within classrooms as "camaraderie," adding that, "For the first time in his life my son has friends." The principal sets the tone for the building with his quiet, calm and considerate approach. Adults support each other professionally and acknowledge that the administration "truly listens." All relationships evidence trust, respect and a sense of purpose, which, coupled with the students' sense of fun, enjoyment and smiles, makes for a happy place.

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 mutually supportive staff, many of whom have served students in this school for several years, embrace new teachers and other staff to form a committed faculty that freely shares expertise. As a result, new teachers profit from good support and mentoring. The administration encourages staff professional growth, so provides useful opportunities for formal and informal professional development, carefully matched to service category needs. Leaders listen to ideas and promote initiatives to benefit students. The school is adopting *The Professional Teaching Standards* to supply a framework for professional dialogue and growth. Lesson observations currently lack reference to these standards. Teachers' professional growth plans are not sufficiently formalized through collaborative discussion based on observations and other data. This means there is no clear evaluation of the impact of professional development on instruction and on student outcomes. However, teachers' and related service providers' desire to continually improve professionally is reflected in their positive work undertaken as inquiry team members. Last year's findings usefully led to extending the use of the ABLLS (Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills), a pre-kindergarten assessment tool to the kindergarten level. The current year's work again focuses suitably on early childhood classes with relevant target skills and strategies. Inter-visitation opportunities for all colleagues are purposeful and relevant to the teacher's service category cohort. The training provide for staff fittingly includes paraprofessionals. Specialist teachers also take part in professional development specific to their role such as speech training to help with students' communication skills. Staff take part valuably in District 75 "best practices" development opportunities. Administrators also visit other similar schools and share useful ideas.

Strong partnerships with related service providers mean that students and parents benefit from integrated service provision. Other significant partnerships include worksites for older students, such as Gericke Farm, Applebee's, and Lifespires. The Far Fund Grant is usefully resulting in "person centered planning" for transitioning older students, while working to secure increased partnerships. The fruitful work combining the Marquis Studio residency with students' artistic efforts, colourfully enlivens hallways

in the main building. Photographic evidence, parents' testimonies and personal data show that support services make a positive difference in students' personal growth.

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's work is rooted in individual education plans, which have timeframes and measurable monitoring criteria. Similarly, the Comprehensive Educational Plan, which the school leadership team revisits monthly to monitor progress, drives whole school initiatives and effort. There is a clear informal calendar for ongoing assessment and evaluation, punctuated by formal interim monitoring checkpoints at strategic times during the year. However, as monitoring detail lacks specificity in some cases, teachers and leaders cannot consistently evaluate progress toward all goals accurately enough; although informal observation and knowledge of students' capabilities does allow teachers and leaders to adjust student groups to efficiently strengthen such aspects as their communication skills. In this way, older students change worksites when indicated through observation. More formal data sources, such as the Learning Environment Survey provide useful feedback, which the administration and staff analyze to inform action accordingly. The active and supportive parent-teacher association is working to encourage a higher percentage of parents to return the survey this year, to give an accurate representation of parental views. Common planning meetings between teachers and related service providers similarly result in part from analysis of the survey, as does the successful creation of cohorts.

Public School 37 is a strong community committed to do the best for every student. One teacher commented gratefully on the community cohesion, saying, "You're never alone here." Adults work together to guide students toward independence and prepare them for competitive employment. Another teacher summarized this, saying, "We're giving the students a chance to make it in today's society." Under the careful guidance of the principal and assistant principals, the school reflectively understands the work that is in progress as it evaluates itself with integrity.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Public School 037	△	▶	✓	+
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, 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>	△	➤	✓	+			
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>	△	➤	✓	+			
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>	△	➤	✓	+			
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							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed