



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Newport School

Elementary - Middle School 184

**273 Newport Street
Brooklyn
NY 11212**

Principal: Mary Anne DeVivio

**Dates of review: May 1 - 2, 2008
Lead Reviewer: Donald Conyers**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Newport School is an elementary-middle school with 528 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 76% Black, 20% Hispanic, 3% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 59% of the students enrolled and girls account for 41%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 86.7%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 85% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty across the grades demonstrate a very good understanding of how to analyze data to improve learning.
- The school supports learners with the greatest needs well through the inquiry process, where positive results are evident.
- The school climate, built on trust and collaboration and shared by all members of the school community, supports very high expectations.
- The teachers augment the school's good professional development with very effective intervisitation cycles resulting in improved instruction.
- The school's core curriculum in English language arts and social studies creates high quality activities for students based on data and interest.
- Student attendance has improved greatly due to the school's consistent efforts and applied procedures.
- The principal makes good use of the budget to create learning opportunities and exposure to multiple experiences for learners.
- Very focused analysis of past and present data by the principal has led to predictions, goal setting and the improvement in student learning.
- The school uses various data very well to modify conditions in the improvement plans, thereby causing immediate improvement.
- The principal is a positive, collaborative and transformational force with vision and pride in the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to increase parental involvement in working closely with their children and teachers.
- Extend the successful delivery of differentiated instruction seen in many classrooms.
- Build on the practice of generating interim goals with appropriate timeframes at the grade and class levels.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The school is undergoing a transformation that has its roots in the effective practice of building a dedicated team willing to deal with the realities of change, introspection and continued learning. The principal, in her second year, works tirelessly to develop a community of achievers. She tells the students often that they are “the best school in Brooklyn” while giving them the thumbs-up signal. The parents support her efforts and think that the convincing leadership of the principal is just what the school needed. One parent stated, “I was ready to take my child out of the school last year and now I am bringing my other daughter here in the Fall.” The school knows that not enough parents are involved in their children’s education. The school has high expectations and students respond well. They speak of college plans and share their long-term goals. Several of the students plan to practice law. They already plan to major in English for their first college degree, since they will be reading and preparing law briefs. Attendance has improved significantly.

The school responded very well to the improvement areas stated during the last Quality Review. This year the school’s improvement plan, professional development plan and lesson observation reports highlight precise and effective responses to the school’s ability to understand, analyze and manage data. This has led to increased student performance and differentiated planning but differentiated instruction is not yet consistent throughout the school. Teachers do a very good job tracking student progress and planning lessons that support each student’s needs, because of their ‘data folios’. However, the school has not fully developed the practice of including measurable and timely goals in their plans to measure success more precisely. Student progress increases because student data travel from teacher to teacher in day and after school programs, where teachers create highly effective interventions.

The inquiry teamwork is highly effective. The two inquiry teams engage in professional study about student challenges and use real student situations to deepen teacher understanding, develop specific rigorous assessments, visit each other’s rooms to provide feedback and plan together for student success. Data results show that the students are making very good improvement. Teachers embrace the process and utilize the training that they continue to receive in the areas of data interpretation, differentiated instruction and the development of effective strategies to improve student learning and independence. The school is already sharing the lessons learned through the inquiry team.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school collects and analyzes internal and external data in the areas of science, social studies, math, English language arts and attendance very well. Continued analysis of data promotes rich discussion about progress across the school, which leads to improvement. The school responds well to the analysis of data for students retained on last year's grade and delivers precise support and interventions. Significantly, the school has made effective use of the November 2007 grade 5 social studies by introducing a highly focused response plan. These positive results are due to well-focused understanding of student needs and progress in these areas.

English language learners are improving due to rich teaching and monitoring during the principal's one-on-one meetings with the English as a second language teacher. The assistant principal heads a significant data-gathering effort into a master database. From it, the principal makes strategic decisions about student subgroups. The principal's view of the data led her to create a mid-lunch math program for students approaching Level 4. She created a non-graded guided-reading groups initiative across the school. Because of the database, the principal was able to make an effective comparison of past results with the assessment results in order to make a prediction about the learning outcomes on each grade. Teachers use 'data folios' well and show a good understanding of student progress. However, the teachers realize that the amount of data is growing and that the use of technology in the management of data is not yet fully developed. The school makes some comparisons with similar schools but not enough to gauge the school's growth accurately.

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.

Teachers know the school goals and work with some parents so they may assist the school with goal realization. They meet weekly to consider student progress and have high expectations for their students. One teacher stated that the principal reviews the data and "We talk about our plans to improve student results". However, many of the teachers have not yet implemented the practice of setting interim goals with expressed timeframes. This diminishes precise goal setting opportunities and more detailed progress measurements.

The school does well in supporting their students in greatest need. The academic intervention services team, the two inquiry teams and the classroom teachers meet with regularity to create success plans. The school's analysis of its elaborate data collection practices lead to planned initiatives, coursework, corrective measures or reinforcement. The principal has an open-door policy and the staff members communicate with parents

through monthly newsletters and calendars to increase the sphere of support. Some parents are eager to participate in the learning and to inform teachers about things to help their children. However, many more parents are not yet involved in active student support.

Students are familiar with setting learning goals. "Goal in the pocket" is a school-wide initiative designed to promote and reward meaningful goal setting. Students set goals and even monitor whether they have reached the goals. However, their understanding about what successive steps they need to take to realize their goals is limited. While some students use rubrics, they do not fully understand how to use them as improvement tools.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school has very effectively implemented a balanced model in the areas of literacy and math. It implements Core Knowledge across grades and deliberately at kindergarten through grade 2 to create a solid foundation for the students. This has led to increased achievement scores in English language arts and social studies. English language arts are the basis for learning across all subjects. The teachers' use of conferencing and peer learning provide an opportunity to gather needed data about student progress and builds trust relationships. The school scheduled a ninety-minute literacy block with 120 minutes two days each week to support skills building and student practice. Administration holds teachers accountable for student progress through formal observations, snapshots and continual feedback. This has resulted in good formative assessment results over time. Some teachers differentiate instruction by modifying the lesson content, providing for a variety of instructional materials and flexible grouping. However, this is not consistent throughout the school.

The principal makes very good use of the budget. She has wisely invested funds in a new guided reading library, Harcourt science program, a translation program, computer software and smart boards to increase student engagement and progress. For example, Plato software use for phonics at grade 1 has improved ECLAS results. The school technology program creates successful opportunities for links between math, social studies, science, art and the school's special high school track for working toward the Math A Regents. The school is now poised to improve this web of support by offering advisory and fortifying science on the elementary level. The school's consistent efforts and applied procedures to ensure high attendance have resulted in a significant improvement.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school's professional development design does a very good job focusing on identified needs of the teaching staff and students. The approximation and application of focus skills and strategies make professional development effective throughout the

school. After careful examination of data obtained during observations and coaching sessions, the instructional team created a menu to address whole-school goals and particular areas of concern amongst the teaching staff. In-house learning opportunities that teachers have like weekly common planning meetings, the formal and informal intervisitation cycles, study groups and action research all serve the teaching staff very well as they improve instructional delivery. This helps to maximize student progress. As an extra, the teacher induction committee provides effective support for new teachers.

The principal forms suitable partnerships to advance the learning opportunities for students. Students benefit from several programs that provide guidance and support in various areas of concern. These benefits allow students to focus more on academic learning. For example, Camp Vacamas is an experience that takes students away from home to work on team building and 'Into the classroom' for conflict resolution. The school is seeking ways to expand these opportunities for students. The well-run and stimulating learning environment is conducive to advancing learning. The presence of concerned professionals helps to minimize discipline incidents and help to create acceptable alternatives. This leads to increased chances to focus and engage teaching and learning.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for 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.

The improvement plan identifies key areas of focus, so dedicated review times offered by leadership give staff the opportunity to examine topics, create curricula maps and structure goals around the key areas to make necessary changes. Goals are set for each identified area but measurable interim goals are not set with consistency. Similarly, the professional development plan has an overarching goal but falls short of providing interim goals that invite specific evaluation.

The school shows greater expertise in using periodic assessment or other results to determine whether plans and responses are effective. The school's command of data analysis enables all practitioners to review and refine their instructional practice. The principal keeps an eye on writing by collecting student work each month. Her comments and suggestions provide meaningful responses and help to calibrate the professional development foci with evident need.

Teachers recognize that students' understanding of content and skills is important. They use curriculum plans and the skill of the week while making informed decisions about whether to remain on a topic or proceed to the next content piece where they will have the chance to address or reinforce identified challenge areas. School leaders and teachers constantly compare results and repair gaps in knowledge. Grade 5 students that scored below level 3 on the grade 4 State science exam are now involved in an extended science experience to close the knowledge gap. The community knows and shares the principal's clear vision to work towards academic excellence for all.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Newport School	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?				X	
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?			X		
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?			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 students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area?				X	
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?			X		
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X		

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?			X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?			X		
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?			X		
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					X

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped