



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**John Wilson School**

**Middle School 211**

**1001 East 100th Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11236**

**Principal: Buffie Simmons-Peart**

**Dates of review: April 7 - 8, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Eileen Hill**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

John Wilson is an middle school with 707 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 85.4% Black, 9.6% Hispanic, 1.7% White, and 2.3% Asian students. The student body includes 4.4% English language learners and 19.8% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 94%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 60.9% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school constantly seeks ways of measuring and understanding students' achievements, resulting in excellent student progress year-to-year.
- The school makes very careful use of data to identify students most in need of improvement.
- The leadership uses strategic and short-term planning very well to set measurable goals for improvement, with clear action plans and time frames.
- Consistently effective decisions about budgeting, staffing and scheduling lead to a broad and balanced curriculum, including after-school and extra curricular classes.
- Consistently high expectations are conveyed to students and teachers and exemplified in successful strategies for raising students' achievement.
- Teachers, including those new to the profession or new to the school, are very thoroughly inducted and supported.
- The arrangements for professional development are comprehensive, imaginative and firmly based on the school's goals and on student performance data.
- Clear, effective and consistently applied procedures lead to good attendance, enable the school to run smoothly and ensure a positive climate.
- The school has very effective procedures for tracking the outcomes of periodic assessments and for modifying plans and practices to improve students' progress.
- The principal is highly respected by all members of the school community for her clear vision for the school and her inclusive and supportive leadership.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop procedures for gathering data on students' progress in subjects other than the core.
- Further develop high expectations by extending the very high quality of display in some classrooms to all classrooms in the school.
- Encourage all teachers to set measurable goals for their own improvement and the improvement of the students in their classes.
- Encourage students to set and record precise goals for their academic progress linked to procedures for monitoring their success in meeting them.

## 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 has strong and consistent procedures in place for gathering data from a range of sources. Data is used well to monitor the progress of students in all groups and categories and as a result students make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. Special education students have made particularly good progress in the past year. The school is now focusing on improving the achievement of Black boys and improving achievement generally in English language arts. Whole school goal setting and planning are very well developed. Action plans and time frames enable the school to pace its progress and implement change in a carefully measured way. The curriculum is rich and varied. Students in all groups receive additional support to enable them to fulfill their potential. The wide range of after-school and extra-curricular programs and clubs extend and enhance the students' personal and academic education.

The school is very well managed. Teachers are regularly observed and monitored and, importantly, given support to improve and develop. Students believe the school nurtures them. Teachers trust and respect the leadership. The principal is very highly respected by all members of the school community; she has an inclusive approach and has encouraged the involvement of parents in the life of the school and encouraged the student voice in decision-making. The school has yet to develop further the use of data for monitoring progress in subjects other than the core. Its approach to goal setting for teachers and encouraging students to set more precise academic goals to help them to monitor their own progress is not yet fully developed.

Very good progress has been made since the last review. The leadership has addressed the areas for development raised at that time. The school now provides more differentiated professional development for its teachers and has introduced academic enrichment programs to ensure it meets the needs of high-achieving students. The inquiry team has made good progress. A group of Black boys has been identified as in need of additional support in English language arts. The school has been precise in identifying the areas where these boys need to make progress and has adjusted the curriculum and purchased additional resources to help it to meet its goal. The quality of periodic assessments made on these students is very good.

### **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 uses a wide range of data to help it understand the progress of students. Acuity is used regularly to provide diagnostic, interim and predictive feedback on classes, grades and individuals in math and English language arts. In addition, teachers regularly conference with students and analyze and keep records of their progress and achievement in class work. The school is further developing its procedures for monitoring and assessing the students' progress in science and social studies and for gathering assessment information in other content areas.

Data is gathered and analyzed on all subgroups and other categories of interest to the school. For example, the school is concerned to extend the achievement of Black boys and has begun to monitor and track their progress through the work of the inquiry team. The progress of subgroups, such as higher-achieving students, special education students and English language learners is carefully tracked. As a result, groups and individuals make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. Special education students have made particularly good progress this year, most achieving level 2 in State tests. The school is further developing its assessment procedures through the use of portfolios of work intended to exemplify the achievements of individual students in English language arts and math. Teachers are being very well prepared for this new initiative by the math and literacy coaches and lead teachers. Carefully prepared training sessions for teachers are held during common planning time. These sessions inform teachers about the principles underpinning exemplar portfolios of students' work. They encourage teachers to work collaboratively and develop a common understanding of how selected samples of students' work can exemplify the highest achievement.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.**

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

The school has clear and relevant goals for improvement, supported by detailed action plans and time frames. Goals and plans are developed collaboratively and shared with the school community. Everyone works towards achieving them. Most strategic and short-term school goals are objectively measurable. For example, the school wants to close the gap between the achievement of Black boys and girls and uses the frequent interim assessments of students to measure how successful it is in doing this. Last year the school identified the need to improve the performance and progress of special education students as a particular priority. The action taken to bring about improvements meant the special education population made significant progress in math and English language arts on State tests.

School leaders and teachers convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents. Expectations of behavior are very well established. Display in classrooms and around the school is sometimes of very high quality and contributes to high expectations. However, this varies between classrooms, with some display areas relatively sparse and less well presented. Students have a strong sense of personal responsibility. They know what is expected of them, even when their regular teacher is not teaching them. Students say they behave well even when they have a cover teacher because they know that they are expected to demonstrate a responsible attitude. They recognize that there are consequences for poor behavior and accept such rules. Academic expectations are also high. Students are expected to meet or exceed the State standards. Teachers routinely set targets and goals for students based on their academic needs. Students do not yet record their own specific goals for academic improvement, although this is something the school wishes to promote. Teachers, in consultation with school leaders, also set goals for themselves and their classes. These are posted in classrooms. Teachers' goals are

always relevant to improving students' achievements, but are rarely measured for effectiveness.

The principal has an open and inclusive approach to parents and the school community. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and receive progress reports every two months. Various strategies have been used to involve parents, including monthly award ceremonies to which parents are invited. The school's efforts to involve and inform parents have resulted in an improvement of almost 40% in the number of parents attending parent/teacher conferences.

**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 offers a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum. Core curricular approaches, such as the workshop model, differentiated instruction as well as informal and formal tests and assessments, provide ongoing meaningful data about the progress and achievement of students. The school population is organized in to four academies, each with its curriculum focus. In addition to the core curriculum, the academy structure enables students to opt for electives, such as foreign languages, arts, information technology and business and community studies. After-school supplemental education study classes, Saturday classes, trips and visits within the City and abroad offer a very wide range of support and enrichment to students. Higher achieving students are offered advanced classes in content areas such as integrated algebra, French, Spanish and the living environment. All students are offered the opportunity to attend the various extracurricular clubs and programs, such as the leadership program and the chess club or to join the girls or boys basketball teams.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are all aligned with the school's goals and based on information about students' progress and achievement. The school schedules time each week for teachers to meet in core subject groups. These meetings make a significant contribution to the consistently good quality of instruction in the school. Students believe the school is nurturing. They trust and respect their teachers. Teachers are open with each other and trust and respond to the leadership. As a result, students and teachers work together successfully to promote high student achievement. Student attendance is good. Data on attendance is regularly monitored and all procedures to encourage attendance consistently implemented.

**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 outstanding.**

The assistant principals observe teachers very regularly, usually with a specific focus on an area for improvement or development, such as English language arts. Teachers are given snapshot feedback, which they report as helpful and supportive in enabling them to make progress. Formal observations take place at scheduled times and teachers receive written reports with goals for improvement. These are always linked directly to improvements in instruction and to improvements towards student progress and achievement. New teachers receive exemplary support and guidance. The assistant principals, coaches and lead teachers work closely with them and model instructional

strategies. They are shown how to plan, use data management systems and make informal assessments of students' progress. The highly effective system of "rituals and routines" supports new teachers extremely well. They quickly adapt to the climate of the school and make rapid progress.

The weekly common planning meetings offer excellent opportunities for professional development and ensure consistency in planning and instruction, particularly in math and English language arts. Arrangements for professional development are differentiated according to the needs of teachers. The school is imaginative in its scheduling to allow teachers to attend professional development courses. Teachers are offered a menu of choices for after-school courses, which take place at the same time as extended day classes, enabling the teachers to attend in school time. All professional development is focused on the school's goals and on the academic or personal needs of the students. The school has strong partnerships with community businesses, such as banks and nursing homes. Some after-school student programs are funded and organized by community business organizations including the leadership club and Champions club. These partnerships provide good support for the academic and personal growth of students. Procedures to enable the school to run smoothly are fully understood by teachers and staff. Procedures are implemented effectively. They encourage student learning and lead to consistently good behavior and high rates of attendance.

**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 principal and other school leaders meet regularly together and with staff, parents and students to monitor, evaluate and revise goals and plans. Although teachers' goals are not always expressed in measurable or quantifiable terms, teacher outcomes are consistently monitored and evaluated against the school's overall goals for improved student achievement. For example, in English language arts teacher assessment notebooks are monitored on a monthly basis to look for evidence of teacher/student conferencing and the progress made by students in meeting targets and goals set for them.

Goals and plans are revised or adjusted where the data shows this is necessary as revealed by interim data on the progress of Black boys in English language arts that showed limited progress. The school attributed this to the literature texts they were using and purchased more boy-friendly texts in order to better engage and motivate boys. Black boys report greater interest in the new texts. Overall, the school makes excellent use of data to track and monitor students' progress and to adjust programs and instructional strategies. The leadership evaluates whole school goals, usually against specific targets. Evaluations lead to further planning and refinement for the next year. This cycle of goal setting drives the stages of development in a clear and logical manner. The principal's very clear vision for the school is of a community in which all members work together in the interests of students and where academic expectations are high. All members of the school community are drawn in to this. The principal offers outstanding leadership that includes working hard and successfully to encourage parents into the school and to involve them in their children's education.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: John Wilson Intermediate School</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				X	

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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?					<b>X</b>
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?					<b>X</b>
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?					<b>X</b>
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?					<b>X</b>
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				<b>X</b>	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly, encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents.					<b>X</b>
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					<b>X</b>

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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?				<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>	
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?					<b>X</b>
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?					<b>X</b>
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?					<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					<b>X</b>

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>