



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public School 245

Elementary School 245

**249 East 17th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11226**

Principal: Patricia Kannengieser

Dates of review: April 17 - 18, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Christina Lewis

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS 245 is an elementary school with 175 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 82.7% Black, 14% Hispanic, 5% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 7.4% English language learners and 11% 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 not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has a good measurement of its performance and progress when compared to other schools.
- Very good use is made of academic support services in meeting the needs of individual students who are causing concern.
- There is a strong environment of mutual trust and respect, which supports students' personal and academic success.
- Good teamwork and collaboration to set goals for student achievement and plan the curriculum are strong features of the school.
- The school has developed excellent partnerships with outside providers that enhance the learning of the whole community.
- A wide range of professional development opportunities is available to enable the staff to improve their instruction.
- The school has introduced a good range of activities outside of the school day to extend and enrich students' learning.
- Students enjoy school and are confident and articulate about their learning.
- Parents value the high expectations and accessibility of the principal.

What the school needs to improve

- Fully analyze the data available to understand the next steps needed for whole-school improvement.
- Continue to involve parents in their children's learning and make explicit to both students and parents the small steps needed to achieve long term goals.
- Consistently use periodic and other teacher assessments to inform instruction and allow achievable interim goals to be set for students.
- Focus on developing curricular approaches that are stimulating, purposeful and promote student engagement.
- Continue to develop teachers' use of differentiated activities and instruction in order to consistently meet the needs of each student.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

PS 245 is a small school that has undergone many changes in the past two years. It is a friendly, happy school where trust and respect are highly valued. As a result of its size, it has a strong family feel and the principal and staff know all of the students and their families. Students feel safe and supported and enjoy their learning, especially the wide range of after-school activities that are available to enhance and enrich their time at school. The school is developing curricular maps for reading and writing, integrating science and social studies, in order to provide a more stimulating and engaging learning experience. The school has a good achievement record that has steadily increased over the years. However it has yet to fully analyze the data to ensure that students are making sufficient progress in relation to prior achievement. Parents value the openness and accessibility of the principal and staff and are very enthusiastic in their support of the school. In order to fully involve parents in their children's learning, the school is developing the use of interim individual small-step goals. This will enable students and parents to understand more precisely what they have to do to improve. Teachers are very appreciative of the good professional development opportunities that are available and are beginning to use a wide range of assessment materials to inform their planning and to differentiate their instruction. However, these are not yet fully embedded into classroom practice. The inquiry team has made a positive start in identifying and targeting a group of underachieving students. They are using a variety of strategies to successfully meet the needs of these students. The team is currently evaluating the implications of their research in relation to improving whole-school practice. The school has made some progress since the last Quality Review in that the issues have been addressed. For example, the school has a good measure of its performance and progress compared to similar schools and there has also been a strong focus on enriching the curriculum. However, initiatives put in place have yet to be reviewed and the impact of their effectiveness monitored to ensure that the school is meeting the needs of all its students. The principal realizes that, "change can sometimes be hard," but she is determined to move the school forward and "ensure that the students are well-rounded responsible citizens of the 21st century who have been given every chance to achieve their potential".

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 proficient.

The school collects and analyzes a wide range of data and uses it to provide a clear interpretation of the performance of each student. This is shared with all staff at class and

grade level. Consequently, teachers have a clear understanding of individual achievements and of those areas where extra support is required for lower achieving students. Progress is tracked throughout the year using a variety of assessment materials and annotated in the teachers' assessment folders. The principal monitors these at regular intervals, and meets with staff to discuss areas for improvement. The inquiry team has made a positive start in researching the under achievement of a targeted group of students in English language arts. Strategies are currently being developed to support this group, for example, more focused teaching on specific areas of weakness. There are effective arrangements in place to support the high achievers. This includes homogenously grouping of students based on achievement level rather than age.

The performance of the special education students and the small group of English language learners is also carefully tracked and monitored. However the school has yet to fully disaggregate and analyze the data to understand the progress of the different groups and grades within the school population in relation to past performance. The school has used data well in comparing and understanding its performance in relation to similar schools but has paid less attention to the implications of the comparisons of their progress. This hampers school leaders' understanding of whether their students are doing well enough. The school has provided training in the use of data to inform instruction, but this has yet to be fully embedded into everyday practice.

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.

Teamwork and collaboration are strong features of the school and consequently goals for improved performance at all levels are constantly discussed and updated. The school uses data effectively in setting the whole-school and grade goals that are displayed as reminders throughout the building. Teachers use bi-weekly planning meetings to view the data and to plan instruction around the needs of the students. Meetings with the principal and coaches help to determine the next steps towards achieving school and class goals. The good academic support team uses a variety of programs in English language arts and math to address the needs of identified students. As a result, these students make good progress towards achieving their goals. The introduction of a guided reading program and the support of an external consultant have focused the school very clearly on establishing reading benchmarks across all grades and levels. Regular assessments ensure that students are tracked and make progress in reading. Students achieving higher than benchmark for their grade work with the grade above and receive additional enrichment activities during lunchtime. The school is developing ways to adopt similar strategies for other areas of the curriculum.

Whole-school goals are shared with all members of the school community and parents particularly value the high expectations and accessibility of the principal and staff. The unanimous view of parents is, that "she is always ready to listen and advise". However, while parents and students are able to articulate long-term goals they are unsure of the interim steps needed to achieve these. Consequently parents are sometimes unclear of how to support their children at home. Although students have the opportunity to set their own goals, these are generic rather than specifically focused on what they really need do to improve.

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 proficient.

The school is currently reviewing its core curriculum in order to provide continuity throughout the school, and links with the guided reading program. The reading program integrates strands in English language arts, science, and social studies. The school has not developed clear methods of assessing the students’ work, and has yet to introduce clear rubrics to inform assessment. Instruction around the curriculum content occasionally lacks focus or purpose due to the absence of clear learning objectives. As a result students are not always fully engaged in the learning experience. Many opportunities are planned for differentiated instruction through small group work before school, enrichment activities and in the guided reading sessions. However this has yet to be fully embedded into classroom practice.

The school provides a rich and varied program in the arts through its strong links with outside providers. This includes workshops in dance and theater as well as newly introduced work on the visual arts. An arts grant also encourages the participation of students and their families in enjoying and learning about the music and dance of different cultures. These opportunities enhance and enrich the students’ learning and build their confidence. A parent said, “We all learn together about the good things in our world.” The principal uses the budget creatively in making strategic decisions to achieve the school goals. For example, she has arranged for a specialized reading consultant to work alongside teachers and support them their planning. A strong feature of the school is the atmosphere of trust and respect that supports students’ personal and academic learning. One student said, “We are a family and all help each other and know each other, good or bad!”

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 principal regularly observes lessons and provides very clear feedback to the staff on the quality of their teaching. Staff agree, that together with the support of the coaches, this has been good individual professional development and can describe examples of how this has improved their practice and made them more reflective. A great deal of thought and planning has gone into professional development to ensure that, as well as meeting the individual need of the teachers, it is also focused on school improvement. Much of the training is done in-house by the very strong team of coaches, together with external consultants working alongside teachers and modelling lessons. In addition they act as mentors to effectively support new teachers. Opportunities are planned for teachers to work together and share practice. As a result teachers are reflective and evaluative about their work. They are eager to make a difference in the students’ learning and are beginning to understand more fully the story behind the data.

The teachers involved in academic intervention are very effective in their work with all students identified as at risk. They use a wide variety of programs with the students and communicate regularly with class teachers on how the needs of these students will be best met, either in the classroom or as small, focused pullout groups. As a result these

students make good progress towards achieving their goals. The school has also obtained the services of a part time counsellor who helps in addressing the social and emotional needs of students. The principal ensures that the school runs smoothly and has been instrumental in creating a positive learning environment. She has also made very good partnerships with outside organizations to support the academic and personal development of the students. For example, she secured funding to support a field trip to give the students an experience of life on a farm. As she said, "I want the students to have a wide experience of the real world by going out and seeing it!"

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 proficient.

The school has developed an action plan that is derived from the Comprehensive Education Plan and is focused on using data to improve the performance of each student. The school reviews this plan throughout the year and shares an evaluation of progress with staff. Predictive assessments in math and English language arts are used to establish a baseline for students' skills. Goals set for students are long-term and lack the interim measures that will evaluate progress to achieve these goals. Consequently, interim assessments and other diagnostic tools are not as effectively used in measuring progress toward short-term goals. Student progress is assessed and measured at various points throughout the year when instruction and groupings are adjusted as necessary. Benchmarks running records are used to assess progress in reading. Currently the use of these is not frequent enough or carried out consistently by all of the classes. Although student goals are not yet set in relation to individual prior achievement, the school ensures that any shortfall in students' learning is identified and appropriate action taken. Similarly high achieving students are given some opportunities to enrich and extend their learning.

The school leaders are currently measuring the impact of the action plan and will use this to determine the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning. They have already identified that math and writing are two areas that need a stronger focus in improving teaching and learning. The principal has worked hard to establish a clear vision for the future development of the school and, in her two years at the school, has begun to implement procedures and systems that will bring about change.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 245	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