



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public School 138

Elementary - High School 138

**144 East 128 Street
New York
NY 10035**

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Dates of review: January 28 - 29, 2008

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 138 is a District 75 school with 387 students from kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 36% Black, 51% Hispanic, 7% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 73% of the students enrolled and girls account for 27%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 83.7%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school has a main site and seven additional sites, three at elementary schools, three in middle schools and one recently established high school site. This allows students to move through the different sites with continuity from the school's services.

Fourteen percent of the students participate in standardized assessments, with the remainder using alternate assessments.

Instruction across sites is provided in a six instructional programs based on the student to teacher to paraprofessional ratio of 12:1; 4, 6:1:1, 8:1:1, 12:1:1 and 8:1:4. Students have a range of disabilities, including severe to profound developmental disabilities, autism, severe emotional difficulties, hearing-impairment and fragile physiological conditions.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School staff work very closely with related service teams and each other to deliver a unified service to meet the diverse needs of students.
- Staff show high levels of commitment to developing the students and their own professional skills and knowledge.
- The school provides a caring and nurturing environment, within which staff work hard to keep students safe and secure.
- Students appear to be contented at school and show delight in their classes.
- The school makes significant efforts to engage parents in their children's learning and provide support for them.
- Data is routinely gathered using standardized and alternate assessments to give up-to-date information on individual students.
- The curriculum meets mandated requirements and opportunities for social, communication and motor skills are woven into lessons well.
- A variety of instructional and communication approaches is used to deliver the curriculum so that students can access it at their level.
- Technology is widely used by staff and students to support instruction, learning and communication.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the use of technology in easier to use formats to make it simpler to identify patterns and trends in progress and performance data.
- Extend staff accountability by making clear responsibilities for specific actions and outcomes within specific timeframes.
- Ensure that professional development is linked strategically to the school's priorities in the Comprehensive Education Plan.
- Identify similar groups of students at similar schools, against whom progress and performance can be compared.
- Analyze data to show variations in learning between different groups of students and use this to plan interventions.
- Continue to work with host sites to ensure that students have full access to facilities.

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 well developed.

The school prides itself on the caring and nurturing environment it offers students, which one parent described as “Children are not a number here.” School staff work closely with other professionals as unified teams to deliver individualized instruction and programs for students. Working with other professionals and agencies is well established. Good working partnerships exist at most sites, but not all students receive access to facilities at host sites, which limits their opportunities to make progress.

Whilst the school gathers extensive data on all students, it does not analyze this to show patterns between groups of students or compare the progress of students at PS138 with students at other schools. Technology is underused to analyze and present data in easily accessible formats. Technology is, however, used well in the curriculum for instruction, learning and communication. Non-verbal students use technology effectively to communicate and to increase their independence as learners.

Staff learn from each other within and across sites, which adds to their formal professional development. Although observations take place regularly to monitor the quality of instruction, staff are not held to account for their part in delivering whole-school goals. The school has established structures for monitoring, reviewing and revising plans, to ensure that goals stay up-to-date, relevant and reflect recent data.

There has been some progress in dealing with points raised in the last Quality Review, mostly in relation to increased sharing of staff expertise and giving some students feedback on their goals, but the full impact of actions has yet to be seen. The inquiry team is recently established and meets regularly to consider the progress of a group of students with autism.

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.

Data is routinely gathered through formal and informal assessments to give staff an accurate and up-to-date picture of the progress and performance of each student. The information is derived from assessments of academic progress, social and communication skills, and motor development to give a holistic view of the student. For

both standardized and alternate assessment students, formal data is supplemented by informal information from teachers' running records which show small steps towards bigger goals. Related service to add to the holistic picture of each student.

The progress of groups of similar students is not tracked and analyzed, so the school is unaware of any patterns or trends in their learning. There are few comparisons of performance with other schools. This limits the ways in which the school gains insights into strengths that exist in similar schools. Students have different needs and are assisted in different ways (hearing-impaired students with cochlear implants and a group of non-verbal students using augmentative communication aids), but no analyses are in place to show the impact of this audiology and technology on their learning.

Staff and administration analyze data in time-consuming ways, to produce data about their individual students. Technology is underused as a tool to support them in this and make data easier for teachers and parents to understand. Training in the use of ARIS and Acuity software has recently taken place, but it has not yet altered ways in which data is analyzed.

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.

There is a high level of collaborative working in relation to goal setting between staff within and across sites, and with related service providers, which supports the delivery of a unified service. Unit leaders from each site meet each month to review progress and plan changes to intervention. There is a clear focus on enabling students from each site to make progress and particular attention is given to any student in difficulty. School staff and related service professionals agree goals and plan how to achieve them through effective collaborative work.

Whilst the school has extensive data on students, this is not always analyzed in sufficient detail to show groups of students with particular areas in need of attention. There is some inconsistency in how the school uses available data to put in place focused programs with specific goals for students. Some staff now use analysis of data to highlight areas for academic intervention services, but this is not consistent for all students.

The school works hard to engage all parents and staff make outreach visits to sustain contact with families who find it difficult to come to the school. This keeps parents in touch with school life and how their children are progressing. Information is adapted to make it accessible to all, with symbols, images and translation used where required. A wide range of workshops enables parents to learn about academic approaches to use at home with their child, any social and legal issues, and help with child development. High school students are involved in plans for their future, through participation at annual reviews as well as including their views in a person-centered planning profile.

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 curriculum is carefully arranged to allow students to access mandated subjects, creative arts and additional programs stated in individual education plans. Class teachers work closely with speech teachers to integrate communication work into class work, rather than allocating blocks of time for speech and communication skills. As a result, a wider curriculum is covered within the school day. Technology is increasingly used by teachers to introduce curriculum content and skills. Students enjoy using it to improve their learning, communicate which brings a greater independence to their learning. Yoga is used to advantage in assisting students to develop motor control and as a calming approach before lessons.

It is clear that staff are expected to increase learning outcomes for students, but the lack of plans with defined roles and actions does not make it easy to hold staff to account.

Students are treated with respect, dignity and as equals with general education students at most sites. However, this is not consistent and results in some students having unequal access to general education facilities at host sites. Facilities for dealing with students' personal hygiene at the main site allow students to be treated with dignity.

Most students are bussed to school, which minimizes level of lateness. Attendance is carefully monitored for students at all sites and staff follow-up absence where the cause is unknown. The high level of unified delivery of services on school sites, means that students need lesser time out of school for appointments with other service providers, as these take place within the school day.

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.

Developing the skills and expertise of staff is an important aspect of the school's work. Classroom observations are effectively used to influence the content of subsequent professional development sessions at group, individual or whole staff level. All staff attended recent training on sensory integration in the curriculum. This was followed by small group training to differentiate knowledge so that different groups of staff could learn how to use the approach to match the needs of their students.

The link between the school's priorities in the Comprehensive Education Plan and professional development is not sufficiently explicit, even though this is clearly considered of great importance for the school. Neither is there an overall plan for the content of professional development through the year, showing long-term planning for staff needs. In other respects, the school does make strategic decisions in its planning for professional development. Staff from all sites meet in groups three times each year for development and share expertise. This prevents staff from feeling isolated and enables those at smaller sites to gain from the knowledge of a large number of

colleagues. In addition, staff at each site have weekly cohort meetings where learning from each other is part of the agenda.

Systems and procedures are in place that contribute to a safe and orderly environment for students. When crises occur, these are managed promptly to minimize further disruption to school life. Self-regulation of behavior is part of the school curriculum and is effective in helping students to use a range of strategies to control their behavior.

Students and their families gain from a wide range of working partnerships to support them in making academic progress and for wider social support both in term time and vacations. This extends to the oldest students who receive extensive support in securing placements in agencies that will follow after they graduate. Their placements are agreed in January which reduces students' anxiety about what happens at the end of their school life and enables them to concentrate on making academic progress in their last months at the school.

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.

Data is used as a matter of course to monitor, review and revise plans and goals throughout the year, but not for longer-term planning in achieving the school's vision. School plans include precise goals which support monitoring of progress towards goals on an annual basis. The goals reflect the most recent data on student progress and performance and are routinely reviewed by the cabinet which makes any necessary changes. Goals are in place for alternate and standardized assessment students and cover English language learners, the mandated curriculum, the arts, communication, health education fitness, technology and behavior.

Staff review students' plans just as routinely at trans-disciplinary meetings of teachers and other professionals. Data from predictive tests is used to determine changes to academic interventions and support increased progress for students. Collaborative meetings, which include parents and agencies involved with the student, are frequently held to review progress and determine future plans, reflecting a holistic approach. Assistive devices or aids are evaluated by therapists and teachers to ensure that each student is given the optimal support through whatever means available. This extends to occupational therapists making tailor-made resources to match students' needs when no commercial alternative is available.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: PS 138	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