



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Thomas A Dooley Elementary School

Elementary School 107

**167 – 02 45 Avenue
Queens
NY 11358**

Principal: James Phair

Dates of review: October 9 - 10, 2007

Lead Reviewer: John Collings

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well
What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review
Overall evaluation
How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Thomas A Dooley is an elementary school with 896 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 27% Hispanic, 24% White and 48% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 15% 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 96.3% which is higher than that found in schools citywide. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has a strong sense of community, which creates a stimulating climate for learning so students perform well and make good progress.
- Special education and English language learners are very well supported to ensure they make the best possible progress.
- There is very effective leadership that ensures the school runs smoothly, teachers teach effectively and students are challenged to do their very best.
- Staff know their students very well, so are able to support and motivate them.
- Differentiated instruction based on good use of data is embedded throughout the school and ensures students are taught well.
- Staff collaborate well to share best practice, ensuring students are fully engaged in learning.
- The budget is used strategically to ensure there is a broad and stimulating curriculum during the school day that includes art and music.
- Professional development is used very effectively to develop teachers' understanding of the use of data to develop differentiated lessons.
- The administration has clear goals for the future, which are shared by the whole school.

What the school needs to improve

- Work collaboratively to use available data to set challenging predictive goals for students of all abilities and regularly monitor their progress towards them.
- Review curricular plans to make greater use of cross-curricular opportunities to enable students to practice the concepts and skills learned in one area of the curriculum in another.
- Give students greater opportunities to apply the skills learned in information technology to support their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

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.

Very effective leadership ensures the school runs smoothly. Students enjoy school, want to come and “find learning fun”. Parents find the school to be very supportive and family oriented. It is a place where staff know students very well and address any issues they raise quickly. Students learn very effectively and teaching is well organized, differentiated and maintains students’ interest. Classrooms are stimulating and celebrate student work. This results in students who are engaged, challenged, perform well and make good progress.

Staff collaborate well to ensure students learn effectively through sharing good practice and identifying where different approaches can improve student learning. There is very effective professional development, supporting teachers in the use of data so that they can plan differentiated lessons. This results in students receiving challenging work best suited to their needs. Special education students and English language learners are particularly well supported to ensure they make the best possible progress.

While the school has a broad curriculum, it is not supported with activities outside the school day. Additionally, students do not participate in many cross-curricular opportunities. Another area for growth is in using data to collaboratively set objectively measurable goals for improvement. The inquiry team has met and is in the process of identifying a particular group of students for monitoring. In response to the last Quality Review the school has improved its professional development of teachers, focusing on improving their skills in differentiated instruction.

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 significant amount of data collected across the school is analyzed and cross-referenced very effectively. Staff know their students very well. They are therefore, very aware of individual students’ progress, their strengths, and what they need to do to improve. This information is used very successfully to differentiate work to match the wide range of learning needs of students in the school. As a result, they make good progress and perform well.

Data is used well to support all students, including special education students and those in gifted and talented classes. Through good analysis of data, the school can demonstrate that its overall performance has improved and compares very favorably with similar

schools. The school also monitors English language learners, boys, girls and ethnic groups to ensure all make good progress and any particular needs are well met.

Due to good monitoring of students' performance, the school is very clear whether individual students or groups of students make better than expected growth as they move up through the school. The student population includes a significant number of students from the district with physical disabilities. The school effectively supports these students and other special education students, as can be seen by the good progress in performance they have made.

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.

While the school does set whole school goals, it does not consistently use data, in a collaborative fashion, to set challenging predictive goals for students. The school uses data to identify and improve the performance of students in greatest need of improvement. For example, the significant support special education students receive is regularly monitored and is continually updated through frequent reviews of their individual education plans. As a result these students make good progress. The school has identified the progress of students who are part of the gifted and talented program as a particular area of focus. By providing differentiated work for these students the school has been able to successfully support their academic progress.

The administration shares whole school goals with the school community through faculty meetings, coaches and Teachers College workshops. Detailed analysis of data and an emphasis on improving student progress creates very high expectations of all. The emphasis is on individual growth and pride in doing one's best. There are good relations with parents who share information about their children to ensure the school is well informed about issues that may affect their children's performance. This enables the school to adjust academic and personal expectations so students make the best possible growth.

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 a strong sense of community. This creates a strong climate for learning, where classrooms are stimulating and challenging, enabling students to work hard and do as well as they can. Students feel safe in a climate of mutual trust and they "find learning fun". As a result, attendance is high. Students have high aspirations and want to give their best.

The curriculum is well structured to enable teachers to obtain good on-going assessment to inform their teaching. Assessment is then used effectively to modify the curriculum to meet the identified needs of students. This is achieved by differentiating instruction and by establishing a range of expectations firmly based on students' prior achievement.

Students know what is required of them to take the next steps in order to improve and are therefore challenged and make very good progress.

The curriculum is well balanced with a good focus on art, science, information technology, music, chorus, and physical education. The budget is very well used to employ specialist staff ensuring these subjects are well taught. Although, the school has just begun to identify opportunities for cross-curricular planning to enable knowledge, understanding and skills learned in one part of the curriculum to be applied and consolidated in another, thus enhancing learning. The school is monitoring the success of its current examples of cross-curricular planning to evaluate the impact on student learning. As a result, the school is looking to extend the use of this strategy in English language arts, math and the use of computers to support and enhance learning.

There are limited curricular opportunities outside the school day but the school is reviewing this as it continues to develop. However, there is a good range of classes at the end of the day to support students who need additional help.

There is very strong staff collegiality nurtured by an empowering and supportive principal. The school has begun to hold teachers accountable for student growth rather than just achievement. This has had insufficient time to demonstrate impact but the school is committed to using data to monitor student growth as a means of evaluating itself.

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 whole school runs very smoothly because of the encouraging and supportive environment the principal has developed, thus creating a very good climate for learning in which students thrive and make good progress. Good professional development in the use of data has allowed teachers to create differentiated lessons to support students more effectively. This has ensured effective teaching where students make good progress and enjoy learning. Professional development is also differentiated to meet the individual needs and challenges of teachers. There are effective procedures for teachers new to teaching or to the school through mentoring, intervisitations and model lessons.

There is a good program of classroom observations and intervisitations, allowing teachers the opportunity to be mutually reflective on the effectiveness of their teaching. This creates a climate of mutual trust, collegiality and support. Teachers are continually looking for ways to share best practice to improve their teaching, for example, through modeling lessons to promote effective student learning.

There is a very good range of support services for students, including academic interventions, speech therapy, guidance counseling, a psychologist, social worker, health coordinator and drug counselors. As a result, students' personal developmental needs are met very well and students concentrate on learning. Of particular note are the literacy paraprofessionals who support teachers in the classroom, ensuring the needs of individual students are met effectively to enable them to make the best possible progress.

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 school has clear, objectively measurable whole school goals, such as, refining the use of assessments to define student progress more clearly. This information is used very effectively to make changes in the curriculum and to better differentiate teaching to address the learning needs of identified groups of students. Another goal is to increase, literacy and math skills by applying and integrating them across the curriculum. Where this has been implemented, the school is currently reviewing whether students gained a better understanding of the concepts due to this approach.

Each subject has long and short-term goals and there are regular review meetings to identify necessary modifications. The goals have clear time-frames and the school is using a good mix of hard and soft data to make more informed use of assessments. This is to ensure all, including higher achieving students, are challenged fully by developing their critical thinking and problem solving abilities.

Instruction is planned using past data to identify student goals so students are clear about the "next steps" and what is expected of them in the short and long term. The school continually looks for ways to improve performance through innovative teaching, differentiation and modification of the curriculum to meet students' needs.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Thomas A Dooley (PS 107)	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 demanding, 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?				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?				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	