

Quality Review Report

2008-2009

Public School 43

Elementary - Middle 043

**160 Beach 29 Street
Queens
NY 11691**

Principal: John Quattrocchi

Dates of review: November 12 - 13, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Frank Jones

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 43 is an elementary-middle school with 1374 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 69% Black, 27% Hispanic, 2% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 91.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 79% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The principal undertook a critical analysis of important aspects of the school that were becoming barriers to further development and impacting adversely on teacher effectiveness, student performance and behavior. As a result, he has recently implemented a range of key strategies which are having a positive impact. They also have the potential to further influence the culture of the school as it develops in to a more effective learning organization. Students talk with enthusiasm about their individual goals, which are now set in English language arts, math and other core subjects. These are reviewed monthly during one-to-one conferences. Students understand the significance of the conversations they have with their teachers and feel valued as a result. Teachers report that they too benefit from this experience as it leads to a greater understanding of the needs of each student. The effective use of data enables teachers to identify individual student goals and differentiate their instruction to meet them. When this is done well students make good progress. However, on occasion, the level of challenge is too low and students do not have the opportunity to extend their thinking. Students know what their long-term goals are but are unsure of the learning steps required to achieve them.

Classroom observations take place but identified areas for development are often too superficial. They are not linked to teacher personal development plans and therefore their impact is further dissipated. There are numerous professional development opportunities available to all staff but these do not always reflect teacher need. Teachers are very committed and particularly appreciative of the principal and the organizational changes he has made. These have impacted positively on students' emotional and social development enabling them to become more confident in their relationships with each other and their teachers. The staff believe they are listened to and feel involved in the decision-making process. They work well together and teachers new to the school consider they are exceptionally well supported. The school provides an extensive and rich curriculum. This is reflected in the learning environment which illustrates the good work taking place in many classes. Associated programs, both during and after the school day, make provision for students at all performance levels. The needs of special education and vulnerable students are well catered for and they make good progress. Because of the range of initiatives it has implemented in recent months, Public School 43 is now ideally placed to continue to raise the level of student performance.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The rigorous collection, analysis and dissemination of a wide range of formal and informal data provide valuable information about the performance and progress of all students.
- The school provides a rich learning environment that demonstrates and celebrates good student work and enhances learning.
- The principal has intelligently evaluated all available data and as a result has recently made some key strategic decisions, which are impacting and have the potential to further impact significantly on student development.
- The increasingly co-operative culture among staff and between staff and students is becoming a major strength in moving the school forward.
- The enhanced focus on the development of social and emotional strategies for students has impacted positively on their attitudes to their work and each other.
- The school provides an extremely effective, broad and rich curriculum with additional programs that take in to account and support the diverse and complex needs of the student population.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop the process of setting long-term, timescaled and benchmarked student performance targets so students become increasingly aware of what they need to do, know and understand if they are to achieve the goals set.
- Raise student and teacher expectation by providing more challenge for high performing students so a greater percentage achieve Level 4.
- Ensure that lesson observations take place regularly and identify the key areas that will further improve the quality of teaching across the school.
- Further refine teacher action plans so they reflect individual need and are supported by targeted, individual professional development opportunities that sustain their development.

Part 3: Main Findings

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

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

The school collects and effectively utilizes a wide range of data from State tests in English language arts, math, other core subjects and sources. This information is rigorously analyzed and further disseminated to relevant members of faculty. As a result, each teacher is aware of what each student knows and can do. Item analysis of test scores takes place to identify areas of need. This information enables teachers to direct their instruction to address deficiencies in learning. This data is further analyzed to provide detail about classes, grades and subjects, which enables the school to make pertinent and timely interventions to address issues raised. This information is supplemented by on-going teacher assessments of student work, which adds to the reliability of the database. The best practice is exemplified by teacher annotations of work which clearly explain what is good but importantly provide guidance to each student about how it can be improved. This provides students with clear direction to enhance their learning.

The provision of support for the different subgroups in the school is good. Analysis of their performance takes place and while no significant pattern emerges the school adapts its organization to maximize support for them. Special education students are taught in self-contained classes. Their learning is augmented by the addition of content area, and by other teachers pushing in to reduce class size and bring specialist expertise to the teaching. In this way, these students make good progress. Similarly, provision for English language learners has been successfully supplemented by programs that target literacy skills and vocabulary development. The use of data has enabled teachers to develop individual short-term student action plans for all students which clearly identify the next incremental steps in learning. These are monitored on a monthly basis by an assistant principal and revised as required. This allows teachers and students to focus on specific identified need. On occasion, these goals lack challenge. Therefore their impact on the pace and depth of learning is dissipated.

In general the school communicates information about student progress well to their parents through written reports, parent conferencing and by phone. They are therefore aware of the progress students make. Some parents are critical about the level of communication while others feel the school makes considerable efforts to keep them informed. The school works hard to create a meaningful dialogue with parents and has run workshops to keep them updated on initiatives taking place.

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.

The use of data to set specific long-term measurable performance targets for grades, subjects and students is a developing feature of the school but as yet it is not having a significant impact on the standards students achieve. Where data from State tests is available, it is used to identify projected goals in English language arts, math and other core subjects. Where there is no State data, the school is developing its own assessment procedures, aligned to the curriculum. This is beginning to be used to project goals in most subjects for individual students. The majority of students are aware of their individual targets and talk about being “a high Level 3 or low 2” but are less clear about what they need to know and understand to ensure they meet with success. Too often, the scope and sequence of the curriculum drives the pace of instruction rather than the learning needs of the student. This results in a level of under-performance and a lack of challenge for the higher performing students. The understanding of these goals by parents is limited and the school plans to address this at a forthcoming parent teacher conference. However, good use is made of this data to provide early intervention strategies for all Level 1 and 2 students and relevant programs to encourage achievement.

The school has recently introduced monthly teacher-student conferencing on a one-to-one basis, which supplements the more informal dialogue taking place daily. Both students and teachers express the view that they greatly appreciate this process. Students for their part consider they benefit from the meetings because they feel valued and are given individualized support in their work. The teachers state that they are beginning to know and better understand the students they teach which enables them to focus their instruction. This greater knowledge generated by the conferencing has had a positive impact on student behavior and their attitudes to school. It has also enabled expectations to be raised and become more explicit. The introduction of the “Morning Meeting” and “Responsive Classroom” strategies has done much to improve the behavior patterns of students. They enjoy the start to the day, lateness has been reduced and attendance levels are beginning to increase.

Cabinet meetings are informed by data, which is used to effectively monitor and refine as required the goals that have been set in the Comprehensive Educational Plan. The cabinet consists of a range of constituents including parents, which ensures school initiatives are advised and evaluated by a diverse group that mirrors the makeup of the community.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

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

The core curriculum provided by the school is aligned to State standards and used to measure student progress. To ensure that the wider curriculum meets the needs of a diverse group of students the school has introduced an extensive range of programs and activities. These supplement the core curriculum and enrich the students’ educational

experiences. The school has an extremely good expressive and creative arts program, which operates both during and after the school day. Students welcome the opportunity to be part of the school band or see their artistic expression enlivening the corridors or stairwells. Good cross-curricular links are made between subjects, as in art where students were creating their own portfolio of Egyptian art in the style of the period. Across the school, programs such as Dolphin for early learners, Smart Start for middle school learners and Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) provide the flexibility to meet the needs of all individuals and groups of students irrespective of their levels of achievement. The school has invested heavily in resources and in developing teacher confidence in matching tasks to student need. The impact of this is clear in many lessons as teachers adopt different styles of teaching to provide differentiated activities for students. In one grade 1 class, all students were engaged and challenged by the work, which clearly matched their performance levels. As a result, all students were learning and making good progress. However, there is still insufficient use of data in a small number of classes to inform instruction. In consequence, in these classes there are limited opportunities available to challenge students or to extend their thinking.

The principal has intelligently evaluated all the results of the learning environment survey and other available data. As a result, he has recently made some key strategic decisions to do with organization and curriculum delivery which are impacting positively on both student and staff development. Students welcome the new arrangements and report that they “feel safe” in the school and “enjoy attending”. Staff speak highly of the principal and are particularly appreciative of the fact that they were listened to and that he addressed their concerns. The impact has been an increasingly co-operative culture among staff and between staff and students which is becoming a major strength in moving the school forward.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school has, to date, understandably focused professional development on differentiation, the value of data, support to implement new programs and a range of opportunities based on identified teacher need. This has had a positive bearing on teacher development and enhanced their expertise. There is a comprehensive induction procedure for teachers new to the school. One stated that she could not have received better support and had settled easily in to the rhythm of the school. Recently introduced staff personal development plans have the potential to be powerful instruments of change. At present, however, the goals are common and focus on process rather than individual development. Classroom observations carried out by the assistant principals lack rigor and a developmental edge and therefore have little impact on improving practice.

All teachers have the opportunity to contribute to school development through collaborative discussions that inform the principal’s decisions. They also meet as grade groups to discuss planning, monitor student work and analyze data. Teachers express the view that this is time well spent and enhances their professional expertise. Teachers benefit from engaging in inter-visitations but these occur on a random basis often without a clear focus. Thus their potential as significant developmental drivers is not fully exploited. Data analysis carried out by the original Inquiry Team to identify students at risk is a positive feature of the school. There are now three Inquiry Teams and this

practice has become part of a whole school system for identifying vulnerable students. The school has developed a significant number of partnerships with outside organizations, which reflect the needs of the school and enrich the academic and personal growth of students.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 leadership team meets on a regular basis to review student, class and grade data. This provides them with an overview of the school and allows for early interventions or changes to organizational structures. They monitor student progress against the whole school goals as expressed in the Comprehensive Educational Plan. In this way the principal is constantly updated about the successes and areas for development required in all areas of the school. He uses this information to good effect. As a result of an in-depth assessment of the culture and climate he considered that there were significant factors impeding effective learning and the smooth running of the school. Having identified the problem he introduced a range of alterations to day-to-day organization, to teaching groups, and to the range of programs offered to students.

The effect of these decisions to date has been to improve the education offered to all students, increase their social and emotional development and to re-establish the school as a learning community with potential to develop further. It is too early to measure the effect on learning in terms of performance and progress. The enhanced focus on social and emotional strategies for students and teachers has impacted positively on attitudes to their work, each other and the progress made.

Teachers also review the progress of their classes and use the formal conversations with students to set new, short-term goals. This is a relatively new system and even though the students speak highly of the process many of the goals are insufficiently challenging. This additional attention on students as individual learners and the greater understanding of their developmental needs has resulted in a much more focused approach to teaching. The principal is absolutely clear about the direction of the school and his vision for the development of the students, and has systematically put in place the key elements that will ensure improvement.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Public School 43	△	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?				X
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?				X
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			X	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?				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 student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?		X		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			X	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			X	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYQ, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?				X			
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?				X			
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X			
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?			X				
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?		X					
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X				
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?			X				
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?			X				
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?				X			
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed