



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

**Quality Review Report  
Office of Accountability  
2008-2009**

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**School of Leadership Development**

**Middle School 313**

**1600 Webster Avenue**

**Bronx**

**NY 10457**

**Principal: Lauren Wilkins**

**Dates of review: February 10 - 11, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Kim S. Outerbridge**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The School of Leadership Development is a middle school with 414 students from grade 6 to grade 8. The school population comprises 31% Black, 66% Hispanic, 0.2% White, and 0.9% Asian students. The student body includes 26% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 85.2 %. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 87% eligibility.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

The School of Leadership Development has made progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report. The principal expresses advocacy for all students and is committed to the vision of the school. Supported by two assistant principals and other extended cabinet members, the administrative team consistently meets to construct and revise school-wide plans specific to the academic goals and expectations that are set for all students. Staff members work collaboratively through common planning sessions held weekly. During this time, guided by an assistant principal or coach, teachers have begun to analyze a wide range of data, look at student work and make overall instructional decisions in the areas of English language arts, math, social studies and English as a second language, but these processes do not yet extend to all cores subject areas. These focused decisions make certain that there is an alignment between the State standards and the curriculum, but differentiated instruction is not yet consistently and regularly used. Feedback from the administration on instructional practice does not address this issue strongly enough. Staff members are able to explain how data, student goals and progress monitoring revolve. Students are eager to share their learning experiences, and can articulate their overall academic goals. Advisories and counseling services provide students with effective ongoing support. Community-based organizations, including the local police department, help the school develop student self-awareness and responsibility. Parents express satisfaction with the school. They receive a handbook at the beginning of the school year and yearlong expectations for families are clear. Attendance continues to fluctuate with the lowest percentages on Mondays and Fridays. However, the school uses internal and external support staff to rectify long-term and or recurring student absences. This includes an attendance team, the student intervention team, network and integrated service center supports.

The inquiry team is beginning to identify instructional strategies to support accelerated learning. The team has taken a great deal of time capturing data for each student in the target population using a low inference observation template. At this time, the members are deciding next steps and discussing possible action plans.

The school environment includes multiple displays of student work, awards, incentive programs, and staff feedback. Interim assessment data is displayed outside classroom doors. The display in another corridor presents names of students with high attendance and or those students who have made the honor roll. Prominently positioned throughout the school, displays show teachers' comments on student work.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Teachers of English language arts, math and other subjects to participate well in collaborative team meetings where teachers discuss their practice, look at student work and data, and set up inter-visitations.
- The school sets clear long-term and short-term goals that are revisited at the end of each marking period in order to target students by way of differentiated instruction.
- The school has identified sub-group populations and analyzes the data well to address student needs in English language arts and math.
- School leaders and faculty make purposeful decisions to emphasize key State standards and ensure curriculum alignment in English language arts, math, social studies and English as a second language classes.
- Teachers of English language arts, math, social studies and English as a second language demonstrate effective assessment as they monitor student progress and set goals to improve student outcomes.
- Students show interest in their learning, want to succeed and are engaged in classrooms.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to nurture school-wide practices using differentiated instruction in all of the core subject areas.
- Further develop a process for teachers to identify skills and strategies to be taught in the area of English language arts in order to accelerate learning.
- Provide teachers with feedback that is both evaluative and specifically focused on instructional strategies in order to improve teacher practice consistently.
- Set benchmarks and timeframes across all core subject areas for short-term and long-term goals so that academic outcomes include necessary adjustments.

## 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 proficient.**

The school effectively collects a wide variety of standardized data that includes academic performance and attendance data and data focused on the school's over-aged population. Before the beginning of the school year the administrative team analyzes the City Progress Report and State standardized test data for both English language arts and math. To determine school-wide instructional focuses at the beginning of the school year, the cabinet and coaches access available data sources and use an item skills analysis. All teachers receive this documentation. One 6th grade English language arts teacher uses a database provided by Teach for America to effectively track her students. Teachers are able to speak to data sets whether in hard copy or electronic formats.

The school focuses well on the analysis of the achievement and progress of sub-group populations, including special education students and English language learners. The school monitors and reviews data from student individual education plans. Eligible special education students are placed in collaborative team teaching (CTT) settings. The administrative team and special education classroom teachers have ongoing opportunities to identify needs specific to the individual child.

Classroom teachers successfully collect baseline and midline data. In addition, interim assessment results from the Acuity system provide teachers with data which is revisited during collaborative team meetings. Student-teacher conferences occur at the initial opening of school so that all students are well aware of their entry levels. In English language arts and math, the school analyzes predictive and instructionally focused assessments from Acuity. Sub-skill analysis and the identification of high priority skill sets are determined. In math, weekly quiz analysis is limited. However, prior quiz results drive the focus of unit tests. In social studies, the teacher analyzes English language arts data and targets skills based on high priority skill sets in reading and writing.

In graph and or narrative form, the school shares data results with parents during parent-teacher conferences. Teachers also call a minimum of fifteen parents a week and document each conversation.

**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 principal has created a helpful administrative handbook to support the work of the supervisory team. This guide clearly defines the expectations for all of the supervisors.

Multiple teams complete and finalize the Comprehensive Educational Plan. The principal writes her goals and shares these overarching objectives with the cabinet and staff and students. One expectation set by the principal is widely known by the entire school community. Every child expects to obtain a minimum Level 3 on the English language arts and math tests. Students express this school-wide goal in conversation and in writing. The assistant principals write academic and professional goals for the school. Using these as starting point, teachers identify four goals, two of which are based on student outcomes. The other two goals come from the teachers' identified need for professional development. Staff receives feedback to ensure these are "SMART goals". Teachers revisit these goals twice per year. Students follow a similar process determining their own goals with support from their classroom instructor. All goals align with the school-wide focus.

Students are beginning to identify goals that are more academically specific. Teachers assist and give feedback although overall comments give unrevealing next steps to students. In the area of English language arts, one student stated his goal to be improving strategies in reading. Other students reported being a Level 3 or 4 on the standardized examinations would be an attainable goal. Written goals in the "data folio" showed various focuses for students. While a template to verify student goals exists, the criteria used to construct individual targets vary across the core content areas. Administrators review teacher and student goals regularly during cabinet meetings. This system for establishing student goals replicates in math and social studies.

An attendance team meets to establish reasonable goals for students with recurring and or long-term absences. Weekly outreach to parents has assisted with moving towards the 90% school wide goal for attendance.

**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 proficient.**

English language arts and math teachers now teach one subject instead of a dual approach of teaching English language arts and social studies, or science and math. This decision, made to support teacher development and student achievement, is working well for the school.

In math, the coach aligns the pacing calendar with State standards effectively. Common planning allows for teacher discussion of instructional strategies. Collaborative grade level meetings allow staff members to identify teaching strategies that work. In grade 6 in English language arts, the school has adopted the VOICES program. This program affords teachers resources that are specific to a skills-based approach with writing/response to literature incorporated. This gives new teachers structure and support. In the 7th and 8th grade English language arts classrooms, teachers follow the pacing calendars created by the assistant principal. Teachers develop skill-based curriculum maps over the course of the school year. Initially relying on standardized test data, the supervisor in charge of English language arts constructed focus areas for the teachers. As interim data becomes available, the assistant principal modifies the skill sets via outcomes from the predictive and the instructionally targeted assessments in Acuity. There is little evidence to support accelerated outcomes for students. However,

interim assessments results reveal improvement within the area of English language arts and math.

During common planning teachers discuss student-learning styles and integrate student outcomes as they begin to plan differentiated learning experiences. Rigor and grade appropriate objectives differ within the grades. In one 7th grade English as a second language classroom, the teacher is extremely organized and plans effective differentiated lessons. Technology is integrated by use of a SMART board. As a result, each group focuses and demonstrates engagement. Students can articulate the goal and task for this lesson. The classroom reflects a progressive and evolving environment where students can constantly refer to skill and strategy charts to support their learning. These instructional strategies are not yet consistently used throughout the school.

The social studies teacher has aligned the State curriculum for social studies that effectively supports student learning in English language arts. Comprehension skills are reinforced during this class. Students work in groups and are engaged.

The overall school culture is positive and students are able to access services that are not academic. Support services for students are readily available to all in need. The advisory program is embedded in the daily program. In addition, each teacher has adopted one student as part of the nurturing environment that continues to develop over time. Relationships with students are good, as students know adults in the building care about them.

**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.**

This year 98% of the teachers returned to the School of Leadership Development. This factor assists the school when planning and making decisions relative to professional development. Teachers participate in professional learning experiences that meet their individual needs, identified through responses to a professional development survey. The professional development matrix includes a needs assessment. Citywide, network, and internal professional learning experiences are offered to all staff members this includes the administrative team. A study group with focus on ARIS enables training to continue as staff members improve core knowledge skills. Teachers experience inter-classroom visitations. Lab-sites are available for these visitations. Teachers express appreciation for opportunities leading to improved practice.

Formal observations are descriptive and focus on commendable features and expectations. Each member of the administrative team undertakes three informal observations daily, with feedback to teachers given within the day. However, the majority of comments do not focus on instruction or specific teaching strategies and, therefore, opportunities to improve practice are limited.

Implementing differentiated instruction is a priority for the school. Teachers who participate in this type of professional development expect to share lesson plans that indicate the differentiated model of instruction. The inquiry team is beginning to identify instructional strategies to support the target population of grade 7 students with focus on writing. In this way, the cycle of action research supports the school-wide focus of meeting the needs of individual students by means of the target group. Low inference

observations give the inquiry team additional data specific to student-teacher interactions and learning styles and outcomes. The team is now studying the low inference observation template in order to determine the practical use for all teachers.

The school nurtures youth development at multiple levels. The student intervention team meets once per week to assess the need for crisis intervention. Referrals are based on teacher recommendations and or other factors (for example, absences). Turn Around for Children, Astor Mental Health Clinic, an in-house guidance counselor, a social worker, and a substance abuse prevention intervention service (SAPIS) counselor all contribute to student growth. The Leadership Program, VOICES, Rites of Passage, Girls for Gender Equity, Dream-yard poetry competition and a host of other programs allow the school to focus on measurable student progress that is academic and personal. The student council is organized to support student leadership. Students meet every Friday to plan events and to support after school programs.

**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.**

Interim data is analyzed as it is made available. Predictive and instructionally targeted assessments are used to identify strengths and needs at the school-wide level and within each grade in English language arts and math. Quizzes, teacher-made tests, and grade-wide assessments are used to monitor student progress in English language arts, math, and social studies. Dates, timelines and or calendars with timeframes confirm substantiated progress within each skill set.

Student results on quizzes inform lessons in the math classroom. The math coach facilitates this process with teachers as weekly quiz data is reviewed. This assessment data incorporates duplicated questions on upcoming unit tests created at the school level. Students show steady improvement. In English language arts, an analysis of student outcomes is charted by question and skill. Teachers in this subject area meet monthly with the assistant principal. Skills taught are modified in lesson planning in order to increase student mastery in English language arts, math, and social studies. The adjustments made are determined by interim assessment results but vary in depth and level of execution from class to class in English language arts. Nevertheless, for English language learners and in the English language arts and math department, varying protocols for monitoring and evaluating student progress exist.

School leaders and the school community express an overwhelming dedication and commitment to develop the school further. Although systems and structures are at an interim level within the area of monitoring and revising, the school is able to provide evidence of proficiencies. In math, these systems are consistent with the cycle of action research. In English language arts, English as a second language and social studies, the processes used to observe student improvement and modify instructional practices are inconsistent across the departments. Despite this factor, student growth is apparent but at a much slower rate when compared to math. The administrative team is strongly considering replicating these structures in all of the core subjects. As the school continues to build a culture of respect for all in a diverse population of learners, the School of Leadership Development is also systemically moving towards building capacity within all of the core subject areas.

## School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: School of Leadership Development</b>	△	➤	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			<b>X</b>	
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?		<b>X</b>		
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?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

### 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.

<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>