



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Talfourd Lawn School

Public School 050

**143 - 26 101st Avenue
Queens
NY 11435**

Principal: Maureen Lore

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Reviewer: Leo Connolly

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

At Public School 50 there are approximately 850 students enrolled from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. Approximately 43% of the students are Hispanic, 39% Black, 17% Asian with the remainder White. There are 9% special education students and 15% English language learners. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding. The proportion of students with Title 1 eligibility is above similar schools and well above the City's average.

The absence rate is below the average for the City and for similar schools. The principal has been leading the school for one year. Thirteen new teachers have recently joined the school, many of whom are new to the profession.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The emergent collaborative planning and teamwork has the potential to impact greatly on student outcomes and teachers' support.
- There is a growing sense of collegiality, mutual support and unity among the teachers at the school.
- The necessary emphasis on developing the skills of reading and writing is providing a sound basis for future academic success.
- The principal has accurately analyzed the developmental needs of the school and has initiated strategies that are bringing order, cohesion and structure to the school.
- Staff are compassionate towards the students and are involved in providing a safe and secure learning environment for them.
- The common preparation time is providing structured opportunities for teachers within a grade to meet, plan, and evaluate.
- The link with Teachers College has facilitated a wide range of professional development opportunities that are geared to the needs of the school, the students and the individual teacher.
- The principal has a high profile around the school and provides good support for teachers and students.
- The instructional cabinet is playing a key role in moving the school towards data-driven instruction.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop the use of data gathered from diagnostic testing in English language arts and mathematics to ensure that common weaknesses in students' learning and understanding continue to be identified and rectified.
- Develop the analysis of available and self-generated data to identify and track trends in performance for cohorts and groups of students so that truly no child is left behind.
- Ensure that the quality of the curriculum and instruction is consolidated, deepened and adapted to meet the needs of all students as they progress through the school.
- Further develop the capacity of the teachers to analyze, use and share data to provide focused plans and instruction that meets the needs of their students.
- Develop the capacity of the administrative cabinet to ensure that the strategies and programs implemented within the school are fully developed and consolidated.
- Develop action plans that support the school goals in an easily accessible and focused document that sets interim goals or milestones, and monitoring and reviewing progress towards them.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The school is undergoing a process of change and transition. The principal, now just starting her second year at the school, has focused on developing data-driven instruction and providing a differentiated curriculum. This has required a change in the climate of the school with a particular focus on individual student need. She has created an instructional cabinet to help her achieve her vision. Specialized programs contribute to helping those students who are most in need.

Many of the practices initiated in the school are still at an early stage of development and though showing good signs of progress will still need further embedding and consolidation. The areas for development identified in this report are issues of which the school principal is aware and are either work in progress or work to be tackled later in the year when staff are more comfortable and skilled in data-driven instruction. The school has good capacity for further improvement.

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 student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

The school recognizes that it is in the very early stages of analyzing and using data to support instruction in the classroom. In addition to the data supplied by the City and the State, the school uses assessments that are directly aligned to the State standards in English language arts and mathematics, as well as Princeton Review. These are particularly useful in that they give the school the ability to measure progress and target skills that need remediation and help to ensure that common weaknesses in students' learning and understanding are identified and rectified. The school has made a promising start with this, though some teachers are more comfortable with using the assessments in this way than others.

The principal has put in place systems and structures to ensure that lessons are aligned with the data. The principal and her instructional cabinet have worked extremely hard to ensure that teachers receive appropriate support and professional development to maximize the impact on students' progress. The administration also recognizes that more professional development will be needed before all teachers are comfortable with using the outcomes of data analysis for instructional purposes. The principal is also aware that nothing has yet been done to analyze the performance of students from different groups within the school.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

Data is now being analyzed and used by teachers to reflect on what has been learned and to plan the next steps for students. The use of individual student conferences is contributing to the setting of goals so that students have some idea about what their next steps are. Although the focus of assessment is on the individual student, the school has established collaborative approaches to assessment through the grade conferences which are providing structured opportunities for teachers within a grade to meet, plan, and evaluate. These meetings are supported by the coaches and the visiting staff developer from Teachers’ College.

Data is analyzed and teachers plan their lessons accordingly, identifying strategy groups and adapting content and presentation to meet the needs of the students. Although this is still at an early stage of development, the conferences are beginning to provide an opportunity for grade teachers to share teaching strategies and to look at alternative methods of presentation to maximize student achievement. In the more effective conferences, data is shared so that teachers can see and discuss which strategies were the most successful and in which areas. This collaborative way of working has the potential to impact greatly on student outcomes. Staff report that they welcome the mutual support and feel less isolated. This is helping to establish a growing sense of collegiality and unity among the teachers at the school.

The school has recently reviewed and modified its systems to support academically at-risk students, a main focus for the school. Procedures are made explicit to teachers and there is an expectation of in-class intervention for six to eight weeks prior to formal referral for an evaluation. Goals are set for these students and there is an effective process of plan, monitor and review. There are a number of strategies in place to support lower-achieving students, for example Reading Recovery, Wilson reading program and ‘push-in, ‘pull-out’ programs during the monitoring period. Early signs are that these strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on student performance. Programs for English language learners are effective in supporting them to reach good standards in external tests and to move towards English proficiency.

The school communicates clearly with parents and involves them whenever possible in their children’s education. Parents are very supportive of the school and its staff and in particular, the principal. They are kept informed of what is happening in school and of any issues relating to their children. A group of committed parents is closely involved with the school mainly through the parent teacher association. Despite the school’s best efforts involvement of the wider parent body has been limited but is improving.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The principal has accurately analyzed the developmental needs of the school and has initiated strategies that are beginning to bring order, cohesion and structure to the school.

In particular she has refocused the school away from a concentration on test preparation towards developing the skills of reading and writing among her students. The school has adopted a balanced literacy approach which meant a significant amount of staff development is needed on an ongoing basis. Some teachers understand how the different elements, including student conferencing and teacher questioning, fit together to develop proficient readers and competent writers. Others, however, are delivering the individual components of the program but do not have the content knowledge to move the students on at an appropriate pace. The development of consistency in program delivery and ensuring that the quality of the curriculum and instruction is consolidated, deepened and adapted to meet the needs of all students as they progress through the school is a significant challenge for the school.

The curriculum is aligned to State and City standards with a clear focus on English language arts and mathematics supported by curriculum maps and accompanying rubrics. The expansion of the cluster science and art teams has increased the amount of exposure to these subjects and improved student motivation. Educational visits, chorus, a chess program and a planned arts program are also helping in bringing richness and breadth to the curriculum.

Staff are compassionate towards the students and provide a safe and secure learning environment. The students respond by being motivated and enjoying their learning, for example, the student government election process and the feeling of being involved in the school. They attend school regularly, want to learn, and respect and care for each other. Attendance is above both similar schools and the City average. Tardiness has been an issue in the past but that has been tackled very effectively by the school.

The principal has made good use of student data to inform her budgetary decision making. For example she has increased the amount of science time available to students with the appointment of two extra teachers, appointed a reading recovery teacher and a Wilson reading teacher in addition to other appointments. She has also supported the introduction of the new literacy program with appropriate resources.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The principal makes her expectations very clear to all potential candidates and appointment is made on the basis of demonstrating a range of teaching strategies, an ability to reflect, a capacity to learn, eagerness, flexibility, high expectations and positive attitudes towards students. Recent appointments are helping the school move towards data-driven instruction and differentiated teaching.

The school provides a wide range of professional development opportunities geared to the needs of the school, the students and the individual teacher. The most effective learning is in-house, particularly within the common preparation time where discussions are focused on how well individuals and groups of students are progressing. The instructional cabinet is effective in moving the school towards data-driven instruction through these meetings. The meetings allow them to further develop the capacity of the teachers to analyze and use data to provide focused plans that meet the needs of their students.

The principal has a high profile around the school, regularly visiting classes and providing good support for both teachers and students. Formal classroom observations are scheduled supplemented with daily informal visits. Because the principal is frequently in and out of classrooms, talking with students, looking at their work and scrutinizing the classroom environment, she has very good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development of her staff. Her 'hands-on' approach is greatly appreciated by the teachers, but the capacity of the administrative cabinet is not yet sufficient to ensure that the strategies and programs implemented within the school are fully developed and consolidated and to allow the principal more opportunity to adopt a more strategic role.

Inter-class visitations are arranged on a needs basis and may form part of a support strategy for a particular teacher. The students feel safe and well cared for and the school runs smoothly. The principal recognizes that the after-school program is not aligned to the school curriculum.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

This is very much 'work in progress'. Assessments of students' progress are taking place on a regular basis through a variety of means and they are now being discussed in grade conferences. Plans are beginning to be revised, amended and in some cases goals may even change. Strategy groups are beginning to be identified. Students who are in receipt of intervention strategies have clear plans with frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress but this is not common practice for all students. The school is at an early stage of using data to inform its decision-making, particularly with regard to realigning the curriculum in response to identified student needs.

Though the process used to develop the Comprehensive Education Plan is very valuable in that it involves collaboration with a number of different constituencies within the school, the principal recognizes that it is not a relevant tool to influence school improvement. There are no interim goals or milestones that would provide the school with stepping stones towards its stated goals. It does not provide an ongoing point of reference for the school's work. The action plans supporting the achievement of the goals are not reviewed or revised on a regular basis and therefore there are no formal means of keeping the school on track in meeting its stated goals.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Talfourd Lawn School (PS 050)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

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 student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 	X		
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 	X		
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 	X		
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.	X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1	X		

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.	X		
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and 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 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		X	
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.	X		
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.		X	
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.	X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.	X		
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.	X		
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.	X		
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.	X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5	X		