



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Talfourd Lawn Elementary School**

**Elementary School 050**

**143-26 101 Avenue  
Jamaica  
NY 11435**

**Principal: Maureen LoRe**

**Dates of review: October 12 - 16, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Peter Birks**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Talfourd Lawn is an elementary school with 851 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 37% Black, 40% Hispanic, 5% White, and 16% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 93.5%. The school receives Title 1 funding for 92% students.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school reviews and updates its knowledge and understanding of the performance and progress of individual students on a frequent basis.
- Systems are in place to train and support teachers in the use of data for their planning and instruction.
- Teachers are fully aware of the school's goals and know what they need to do to translate these goals into classroom activities.
- School leaders and teachers are developing a healthy school spirit of personal accountability.
- Teachers are successfully increasing their ability to plan for and provide differentiated instruction in the classroom.
- Classroom observations by school leaders are consistent in reinforcing a policy of differentiated planning and teaching based on analysis of pertinent data.
- Teachers new to the profession receive clear direction and support.
- The school operates efficiently to support and encourage student learning.
- The school evaluates well the effectiveness of its plans and interventions and amends its plans promptly when the need arises.
- The principal provides a clear and strong vision for the school and her cabinet supports her enthusiastically and effectively.

### What the school needs to improve

- Formalize systems to identify patterns of progress of different groups of students according to gender, ethnicity and other categories.
- Identify similar schools and organize data to generate comparisons.
- Devise and implement ways to raise parents' and caregivers' participation in the school's work.
- Adopt a more rigorous approach to establishing interim goals for student outcomes, within timeframes.
- Ensure greater consistency in the way that teachers use data to plan for and monitor student outcomes.

## 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 proficient.**

Talfourd Lawn Elementary School is undergoing a period of intensive development in the way that it collates and manages school educational data. This is leading to an improvement in the performance and progress of its students. Under the excellent leadership of the principal, and with the able and enthusiastic support of the cabinet, the school has made remarkably good progress in this area since the last Quality Review. The school is establishing a completely new curriculum culture based on a renewed understanding of the performance and progress of individual students.

Teachers are fully aware of the school's goals and know what they need to do to adapt their planning and instruction strategies to meet these goals. They are modifying their approaches to plan for and provide more differentiated instruction in their classrooms. In some cases this work is well developed but there is still inconsistency. The school leaders and coaches provide very good guidance and support for this work.

Classroom observations by school leaders are successful in promoting the school's goals. Staff are developing a healthy school spirit of personal accountability for the performance and progress of individual and groups of students. The school operates efficiently to support and encourage a focus on student learning. Teachers new to the profession receive clear direction and support.

The school inquiry team is active. It is preparing a professional development program for staff in preparation for the implementation of the new information management program launched recently by the city.

### 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 school collates and reviews very well a large amount of useful data relating to the performance and progress of its students. It updates its knowledge and understanding of the performance and progress of individual students on a frequent basis. School leaders are now adept at identifying particular individuals and groups of students who have additional challenges to their learning, for example, students with special educational need and English language learners. There is a clear focus on the progress of these and of all students.

The school collates data on student performance and progress centrally, but sees most benefit for its students through the teachers' management of the data. They now have more detailed and specific information about the performance, progress and additional needs of their own students. They maintain assessment folders for students in their class and update these on a regular basis. They have a good understanding of the performance and progress of individual students. Lively grade conferences look at the progress that individual students make during the year and teachers consider the next steps to accelerate the pace of that progress. Teachers share this information with their colleagues in adjoining grades and this helps to focus not only on student progress but also on the pace of that progress through the school.

School leaders and coaches provide good support and guidance as teachers acquire new skills of data analysis and develop techniques to manage the changes to instruction strategies that this new information makes possible. In some cases, the school uses additional support teachers creatively to help enhance student progress.

The school is beginning to analyze the performance of students according to more formal groupings such as ethnicity or gender. It does not yet compare its performance with that of similar schools.

**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 school uses information from its monitoring and testing procedures well to evaluate the academic and social progress of students as they move through the school grades. From this analysis, teachers, with the assistance of the data manager, are able to identify accurately those students in greatest need of support. Teachers collaborate to provide effective support and stimulation for these students. They do this not only for their work within their grade, but also as they move between grades. This makes the students' development more cohesive.

Thanks to the enthusiasm of staff, collaborative planning activities are developing well. This is helping to address some inconsistencies that still exist in differentiated instruction in the classrooms. The joint planning activities reflect the way that the school is increasingly sharing and understanding the information about the performance and progress of students. Staff see the detail of information that is now available as an exciting opportunity to help them with their planning. As the principal expressed it, "Teachers are amazed at what the students know and don't know." There is a common sense of purpose amongst staff to improve the performance and progress of students through use of the clear and accurate patterns of information and by pragmatic pursuit of all sources of support.

The school is beginning to share its heightened expectations with parents and caregivers to raise their participation in the life of the school. Parents and caregivers already receive progress reports as well as test scores and the school encourages them to attend parent conferences to discuss their child's progress. A school leadership team of six educators and six parents assists with planning for school developments and encourages a sense of empowerment amongst parents. Parents eagerly await the appointment of a new parent coordinator to help facilitate this work.

**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 proficient.**

The school uses the detailed information on the performance and progress of individual and groups of students to clarify specific teacher responsibilities. Each assistant principal works with a different combination of grades to manage the professional development of staff and to provide support. They account for their work on a weekly basis to the principal. As a result, school leaders and teachers are developing a healthy spirit of personal accountability within the school.

Teachers see access to more specific and up to date data as an aid to their planning and a beneficial influence on the manner of instruction in the classrooms. To meet specific student needs identified by the data, classroom planning is becoming more detailed and incorporates a more differentiated style. Grade conferences provide good opportunities to develop these practices in a collaborative way. Coaches provide specific and very helpful subject support.

The desire of the school to enhance the performance and progress of students drives school budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions. The leadership of the school establishes financial strategies based on identified school priorities for the period. Accurately directed expenditure contributes to improvements in student academic performance and behavior.

The school promotes an environment of trust and support with transparency of goals. Despite the additional demands made by the need to assimilate and analyze a new range of statistical data, staff feel well supported. As the knowledge and understanding has grown about the specific needs of individual and groups of students, staff have become more appreciative of the benefits of working in an atmosphere of mutual support.

The school has worked hard to improve punctuality and attendance rates for students. As a result, punctuality has improved considerably and school attendance rates are now slightly higher than schools citywide.

**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 proficient.**

The school uses classroom observations effectively. They are an integral part of its strategy to raise the overall pace of student progress by assisting staff in using data analysis to accelerate the learning of students in their care. The principal and assistant principals conduct formal classroom observations periodically, both for tenured and un-tenured teachers. They are consistent in reinforcing a policy of differentiated planning and instruction. Alongside school coaches and other staff members, they also make informal supportive classroom visits on a regular basis and such visits have become a valued part of normal school life. Sometimes, by agreement, visits will take the form of model lessons, which teachers report, are an effective way of sharing good practice.

Similarly, intervisitations by teachers, both within and across grades, are promoting a beneficial culture of mutual support and advice. Teachers are relaxed about visiting each other's classrooms and find it a helpful way to share their professional understanding and skills.

Teachers new to the profession receive clear direction and very good practical support from the school. Within the school, they partner with a 'buddy' teacher from the same grade, assisted by the coaches with their classroom preparations, and receive good advice and support from teacher colleagues.

The clear expectations of the school for enhanced, differentiated planning and instruction, and linked issues emerging through classroom observations, drive the professional development opportunities for staff. Coaches demonstrate lessons, modeling good practice, and teachers work alongside colleagues to help develop helpful strategies.

Well-organized management systems enable the school to operate effectively to support student learning. Delegation of responsibility is an accepted feature of the school organization and staff recognize their individual role in the efficient management of the school. Hispanic translation services are available in the school and this is helpful to parents and caregivers. After-school activities include helpful links with a Catholic charity. A retired seniors program enables students to reach out into the community.

**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 proficient.**

Regular review by the school leaders of the performance and progress of students is a strong feature of the school's developing assessment processes. The school leadership has focused sharply on the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students. They have amended plans, changed groupings of students in some cases and enhanced provision for very able students. These school plans do not always contain written, detailed interim goals that are objectively measurable and with clear time frames for evaluation, but the school is making good strides to correct this.

There is a clear and effective strategy for the examination of school data, the evaluation of its importance and the implementation of resultant outcomes. The school cabinet assesses the assessment data and ongoing information from other evaluations with increasing skill. They discuss the effectiveness of the measures currently in place in the school to address emerging issues. School leaders hold discussions also with staff to consider the need to modify school plans in the light of this analysis. Grade supervisors and coaches work with teachers to implement any revised plans and to monitor their effectiveness. Classroom visits and the collaborative activities of staff sustain the momentum. This process is having beneficial effects on teacher planning, student outcomes and on the pace of student progress.

The principal has a very clear vision for the future development of the school and has an outstanding appreciation of the steps necessary to implement this vision. She recognizes the importance of "smart teaching" and understands very well how to organize the school and its curriculum in such a way that the school can facilitate and acknowledge such teaching.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Talfourd Lawn Elementary School (ES 050)</b>	△	➤	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>			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 . . .	△	➤	✓	+	◇
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				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 . . .	△	➤	✓	+	◇
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			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			X		

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>▷</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X		

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>▷</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X		

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>▷</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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 make 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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X		