



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Sheepshead Bay School**

**Public School 052**

**2675 East 29<sup>th</sup> Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11235**

**Principal: Ms Ilene Altschul**

**Dates of review: September 25 – 26, 2006**

**Reviewer: Peter Lewis**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The school provides an education for 750 students from pre-kindergarten to grade 5. The proportion of White students is higher than both similar and schools across the City although the proportion eligible for Title 1 funding is closer to the average. The school's enrolment of English language learners, particularly those with low levels of literacy in their home language, has shown an increase over recent years. Attendance has improved since the principal's appointment, and is now slightly above both similar and City schools.

The school's aims identify the high priority that is given to teaching, learning and meeting high standards for all students. The curriculum emphasizes core skills in English language arts and mathematics, as well as science, social studies, the arts, physical education and technology.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal, very well supported by the two skilled assistant principals, leads the school very effectively and has brought about considerable improvement.
- Staff and parents fully understand and share the school's vision; relationships are strong and reflect a commitment to high expectations.
- The school's focus on key skills, particularly in literacy and mathematics has been successful in improving students' learning.
- Information relating to students' progress is very well used in ensuring that the curriculum meets their needs.
- Students' social and emotional needs are exceptionally well catered for so that they feel safe, valued and helped in their learning.
- Students are confident and have very positive attitudes to their learning which are very well promoted by all staff.
- Very strong relationships between the school and parents ensure that students who experience difficulties in their learning are exceptionally well supported and so make rapid progress.
- Very well planned professional development is backed up by rigorous monitoring and very good levels of support which lead to a consistently high quality of teaching.

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop the school's good assessment strategies in subjects other than literacy and mathematics, and include teachers' assessments of students' progress as well as more formal testing.
- Simplify the school's comprehensive evaluations and plans for development into a single, brief document that focuses closely on planned outcomes and how these will be achieved.
- Share this document throughout the school community to involve more staff in planning and decision-making.
- Refine the good links between the science and social studies curricula and strengthen the links with English language arts and mathematics.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well developed school.**

Sheepshead Bay Elementary is a well developed school that provides a good quality of education for its students. They are taught well and, frequently, outstandingly well and so make good gains in their learning. The school makes good use of information that helps it to know where it is successful and where improvements need to be planned. It responds well to changing circumstances, such as the increasing proportion of English language learners. It has a clear picture of the direction for future development that the school review has confirmed as accurate and appropriate.

Parents, students and staff are proud to belong to such a vibrant school community and all feel well cared for and supported. This is due to the skill and commitment of the principal and her assistant principals who have successfully built an enthusiasm for learning amongst students and staff. Because of these features, the school has made considerable improvements in its provision for its students, and is very well placed to continue to develop further.

### 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 well developed.**

Across the school, teachers and administrators make good use of data in building their understanding of students' performance. The school has a strong and appropriate focus on developing students' skills and understanding in literacy and mathematics. In these areas, an unusually good range of performance data is well utilized and has a positive impact on the curriculum and on students' learning. Because of these features, the school is able to keep a close track on the progress made by individuals and groups. This is particularly evident in the pattern that is followed by the Academic Intervention Service (AIS) team who examine the progress made by identified students on a weekly basis, as well as in the formal twice-yearly assessments. In this way, any slowing of progress is quickly identified and appropriate interventions planned. In a similar way, the progress made by the growing number of English language learners is carefully and accurately tracked, which ensures that they are enabled to access the curriculum and so make good gains in their learning. Very good communication strategies across the school enable this pattern to be replicated for other students. Parents are regularly informed, and value the quality and range of information that they receive.

The careful use of regular assessments in reading, writing and mathematics, and the degree to which this information is passed to the administrative team provides good quality feedback to the teachers. The school focus on developing teachers' skills in using portfolios of students' work, as well as in developing their use of conference notes, is improving consistency of practice across the school. The school has sensibly identified

the need to apply these strategies to its assessments of student performance in science and in social studies, and has made a good start in this.

**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 well developed.**

The school’s use of a wide range of assessment information is instrumental in enabling the setting of whole-school goals and in ensuring that students make good progress, particularly in literacy and in mathematics. As a result of work the school has already undertaken, teachers are accurate in their grading of students’ work and in helping students to understand what they are doing well and what they need to do in order to improve. The school supports teachers in agreeing standards collaboratively through good levels of conferencing and carefully structured portfolios of students’ work. The school is committed to continuing improvement and, because of this, is investing time in developing teachers’ skills in using assessment even further. As a result, teachers’ planning is well matched to the needs of individual students, and to subject aspects in which development is required. The school recognizes that these strategies, highly effective as they are in ensuring students’ rapid learning in literacy and mathematics could be still further developed through the social studies and science curricula, and has planned developments accordingly.

In a similar way, professional development is well matched to the school’s development needs in consolidating the strengths in teachers’ use of assessment rubrics across grade levels. Students with identified learning needs, including the faster learners, are particularly well provided for through the school’s use of a wide range of testing and assessment strategies that are closely tracked against the goals that are set, for example through accurate and regularly updated individual education plans. Staff and parents work closely together in sharing information about students’ progress and the goals for future achievement

Through these strategies, the school has secured clear improvement in the standards achieved, particularly in literacy and mathematics. Good links are being established between subjects; for example, in the use of writing to improve students’ learning in social studies. The school recognizes the scope for refinement of its use of data to track students’ progress and to set goals through science and social studies, to the same level as is the case in literacy and mathematics.

**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 well developed.**

The degree to which instruction is planned and modified according to the needs of students is a strength of the school. The school budget is used carefully to support the curriculum and planned improvements. Teachers readily describe their accountability for students’ learning and exemplify the good range of information that they use to inform their

work. Information about students' progress is used well in ensuring that high expectations are reflected in, for example, the degree to which a range of resources is used to differentiate instruction in reading. The curricula for reading, writing and mathematics are well developed and the school has made a good beginning in its use of data to develop the social studies and science curricula, but more remains to be done. Patterns of student achievement are carefully analyzed and used in identifying strengths, as well as areas which require further development. A good example of this is the work that the school is undertaking to extend the newly introduced science curriculum to ensure teachers' confidence in its application.

Relationships between students and teachers are exceptionally well modeled by the principal and assistant principals and are reflected in the range of interactions between students and adults across the school. Together with the school's successful implementation of strategies to improve attendance, this promotes a very positive attitude to learning amongst the students. Students describe their enthusiasm in class and the degree to which teachers make learning exciting for them. Teachers know their students well, including those who experience difficulties in their learning, and use this information to create a safe environment in which difficulties are identified and addressed at an early stage.

**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 well developed.**

The school regards the professional development of its staff as central to its development and its success. This is a school that is reflective about its practice and one in which the commitment to secure continued improvement is shared and has resulted in positive changes over time. Extensive strategies for staff development are rooted in the careful selection of staff with particular expertise, and in relation to identified areas for improvement. A good example of this is seen in the recruitment of one of the assistant principals who is an experienced trainer in the Wilson program. Staff confidence in this aspect of literacy has increased in line with student achievement as a result of the leadership that she has provided. Staff development is further strengthened through well planned strategies of monitoring, support, and guidance. A good understanding of the quality of instruction is developed through very well structured pre-conferencing, lesson observation and feedback schedules. 'Learning walks' are undertaken by the professional development team. The understanding that this brings to the school's assessment of quality and consistency is further enhanced by the regular scrutiny of students' work. These activities not only enable school leaders to identify strengths in teaching and the curriculum, but also to reinforce the analysis of data to evaluate provision and plan for improvement. A recent example of this is in the improving consistency with which teachers use conference notes to differentiate instruction.

The principal has very high expectations of both staff and students that are clearly communicated across the school; as one teacher said, 'She makes me want to work hard and make a difference for our students.' A sense of purpose pervades the school. There is clear evidence that a good range of support is provided which has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching across the school.

**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 proficient.**

Although overall, the review confirms the school's evaluation of its performance against this quality standard as proficient, there are well developed aspects of its practice which demonstrate the school's capacity to secure further improvement.

Regular and focused evaluations of student data are used well in establishing whole-school goals and in assessing the degree to which improvement has been secured. The school has accurately identified inconsistencies in the degree to which this information has been used across grades both in identifying areas that require improvement and in modifying goals. Planning for whole-school improvement is comprehensive and makes good use of a wide range of data from tests, other assessments and both formal and informal evaluations of teachers' and students' work. In its present format, this planning lacks sufficient detail, particularly in relation to clearly defined 'mileposts' against which progress towards the identified goals can be measured, and modification undertaken if necessary.

Since the principal's appointment in 2001, there is clear evidence of improvement in the school's ability to analyze its performance and to plan for improvement. Attendance has improved over this period, as have results in English language arts and in mathematics. Leadership structures have been put in place and significant improvements have resulted from the focused use of student data in analyzing variations in effectiveness and in using this information to involve staff at all levels in planning appropriate actions to secure improvement.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Sheepshead Bay School (PS052)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
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"> <li>• ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students*</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
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"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>

\* 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.

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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.			<b>X</b>
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.		<b>X</b>	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	