



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

George V. Brower School

Public School 289

**900 St Marks Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11213**

Principal: Mr. Dennis Jeffers

Dates of review: October 11 – 13, 2006

Reviewer: Alan Boyle

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The George V. Brower School has 915 students enrolled from pre-kindergarten to grade 5. Most of the students (94%) are Black and have a Caribbean heritage. Just under 5% are Hispanic and the remaining few are White, Asian or other groups. Eighty eight percent of students are Title 1 eligible; this is significantly higher than the City average (72%). About 14% are special education students and 14 students were classified as English language learners in 2005.

There are two full time pre-kindergarten classes; one of these is designated for special education students.

Students enrolled at P396@PS289, part of District 75, are accommodated in the school. These students have their own specialized staff and they join students from George V. Brower School in mainstream classes.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Sustained improvements in students' achievements close achievement gaps.
- Precise analysis of student achievement data in mathematics improves teaching.
- A wide range of available resources support students who make slower progress.
- The detailed curriculum planning and pacing calendars effectively support instruction.
- Professional collaboration between staff is clearly focused on student achievement.
- Students make very good progress in classes where the teacher moves with the students from one grade to the next.
- Students are motivated by the respect shown to their work on display in classrooms and in hallways throughout the school.
- Use of rewards modifies students' behavior and improves learning.
- There is strong leadership of the administration team and growth of instructional leadership throughout the faculty.

What the school needs to improve

- Fix annual expectations for each individual student in terms of their levels of achievement so that they may be collated to form high expectations for each class and grade across the school.
- Use the school's own data to set precise goals in the annual Comprehensive Education Plan for students' progress in terms of the proportions of students at each level, for each subject, in every grade.
- Use the State and City test data analysis, when the results are available, to evaluate progress towards these goals set in the Comprehensive Education Plan.
- Construct and administer surveys for parents and students to seek their views about issues such as students' progress, behavior and how the school deals with complaints.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with well-developed features.

Sustained improvements in recent years have made an impact on student achievement at George V. Bower School. The school has changed from requiring corrective action to being recognized by the State University in 2005 as a school that is closing the achievement gap. This is a tribute to the well-developed instructional leadership across the administration and the faculty that has engaged the students with their learning. Together, they have achieved the extraordinary. The school has developed its own detailed item analysis of student achievement in mathematics at each grade. Teachers use these data to plan with more precision, taking account of individual students' needs. Detailed curriculum planning ensures consistency and it is supported by a wide range of resources that are effectively used. Professional collaboration is well-developed and has made a significant impact on the school's recent improvements to student achievement.

The school does not make best use of the data available to set challenging expectations for students' achievements in State and City tests. The school has successfully implemented a positive intervention and support strategy to improve students' behavior. All students are aware of the strategy and know how they can earn rewards. There is conflicting evidence about its impact on student behavior that the school needs to resolve. Some parents have concerns about how the school handles complaints. The school needs to canvas parents' views more widely and use them to inform future planning.

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.

The school gathers a wide range of data about student achievement. Some of these, such as the results in the annual State and City tests, are available to all schools. They enable the school to compare the performance of its students with those in other similar schools and the State and City average scores. These data are useful only for evaluation purposes.

In addition to these, PS 289 has a well-developed system of its own. At the end of each unit of instruction in mathematics, all students have a test based on the work covered in each grade. The mathematics coach and her team have developed a sophisticated skills analysis of the results for each test. This gives each class teacher immediate information about which operations, or concepts, each student has mastered and which they have not. Such a detailed analysis enables teachers to plan their next lessons, with more precision, according to students' prior learning.

In addition to this, the item analysis provides the principal and assistant principals with a picture across each grade of the differences between classes in terms of the proportions of students that successfully mastered each operation. This overview reveals patterns in the

data that pinpoints where additional support may be necessary either for a particular teacher or for the curriculum overall. The English language arts coach is currently developing a similar system for literacy.

The school has a finely tuned mechanism for monitoring the progress of any individual student, or groups of students, over time. This includes the performance of different ethnic groups, English language learners and other categories of interest to the school. It provides a reliable basis on which to drive instruction and improve performance.

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

Classroom teachers consistently use their own assessments and other available data to plan instruction according to the students’ needs. There is a well-developed system to identify those students who need extra help and individual plans are quickly put in place. Parents and students confirm that the school keeps them well-informed about students’ progress. Some parents have negative feelings about approaching the school with concerns about their children. At present the school does not have a systematic way to collect the views of all parents and take appropriate action.

The Comprehensive Education Plan has goals that are based on a detailed analysis of past performance using data from the State and City examinations. While these data may be useful for evaluating past performance they are unreliable for setting future goals because of the time delay between the examinations and the publication of results. Consequently, the Comprehensive Education Plan includes fairly general goals about moving students from level 1 to 2 and so forth. However, the school already has more precise, recent and reliable data about students’ achievements which it could use to set future targets. The fact that these data are not used in the Comprehensive Education Plan makes this aspect undeveloped.

The school does not use its own assessment data to fix annual expectations for each individual student in terms of their level within each subject at every grade. They are not discussed with students and parents to raise expectations and indicate clearly what each student needs to do and how the school will support them. This aspect is also undeveloped. Teachers do not gather these data to form progress expectations for the whole class. In turn, the administration does not then draw these data together to indicate precisely how many students are expected at each level in each subject in the State and City tests. These data have the potential to drive the Comprehensive Education Plan and make it more relevant to the school.

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 school has a well-developed curriculum plan that provides great consistency between classes in each grade. The plans, pacing calendars and regular tests support teachers in

their day-to-day lesson planning. The quality of these data that the school generates itself drives instruction and makes differentiation well-developed. There is a wide range of resources available for teachers to use and the school is well-equipped with books, programs and learning materials to support all students. As a result, students are actively engaged in their learning and motivated by the respect shown for their work, evident in the high quality displays in each classroom and along the corridors.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are all driven by the school's own assessment data and the analysis of what students learn.

All class teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They know their students well and understand their personal and social needs as well as their academic progress. In some classes the teacher moves with the class from one grade to another. Students in these classes appear to make better progress in the second year with the same teacher compared with other classes in the same grade that have a different teacher. This is a well-developed feature of the school.

Attendance at PS 289 in 2005 was below average and the school has appropriate strategies in place to encourage better attendance and punctuality. Students with poor attendance are encouraged to improve while at the same time, students with good attendance are encouraged to maintain high standards.

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.

All staff in the school are committed to using data to improve students' progress. The school benefits from a stable staff. No new teachers were hired this year. Professional development is a high priority in the school and it is well-developed. Collaboration is a positive feature of the way that teachers meet weekly in grade teams to plan their lessons. This enables them to share good ideas, support each other and spread good practice. It is clearly focused on student achievement. Professional collaboration at the school also provides a well-developed form of evaluation.

The principal and assistant principals carry out formal lesson observations and informal walkthroughs. These are informed by student achievement data and teachers are given written feedback and appropriate support if necessary. The administration is respected and has clearly demonstrated the ability to make change happen. Five years ago, the school required corrective action. Last year the school gained an award from the State University for closing the achievement gap. This is clear evidence of the leadership provided by the administration team and the growth of instructional leadership throughout the faculty.

The school has recently implemented Positive Behavior Intervention and Support to modify students' behavior. It has widespread support in school and the relevant committee includes all interest groups in the school, apart from the students. The system is popular among the students as they collect rewards in class that are saved and form a currency with which they may buy items from the well stocked 'Lion's Den'. All students understand how to gain awards by being prepared, respectful, responsible and safe. There is conflicting evidence about its success in terms of improving students' behavior. On one hand the school is commended for its low number of suspensions recently. However,

some parents and students expressed concerns about incidents of bad behavior by students. The school has not extended its existing pupil survey about what rewards students would like or to seek student's views about incidents of bad behavior. The school runs smoothly; all procedures are clear and well communicated.

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.

The school already uses the analysis of results in the State and City examinations to evaluate its progress in the Comprehensive Education Plan. This plan does not currently contain specific goals in terms of the proportions of students at each level, in every subject, across all grades to make it more rigorous and relevant. The school's own data is available to set such goals but not yet utilized in this way.

The well-developed and detailed analysis of students' understanding referred to under Quality Statement 1 enables the school to compare progress across classrooms and grades. These regular assessments each month, throughout the school year, are used to inform the administration about progress with plans and interventions for individual students.

Whilst budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are guided appropriately by students' needs, this is more effective given the detailed and precise data emerging from the analysis of regular tests and the resources available in the school. By closely monitoring each individual student's progress after every test, the school directs first level interventions by classroom teachers with appropriate support. This is a well-developed feature.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| SCHOOL NAME: George V. Brower School (PS 289) | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 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 | |