



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Daniel Hale Williams School

Public School 307

**209 York Street
Brooklyn
NY 11201**

Principal: Roberta Davenport

Dates of review: March 27 - 28, 2007

Reviewer: Ann Organisciak

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Dr. Daniel Hale Williams School, PS 307, is located in Northwest Brooklyn and currently serves 337 children in pre-kindergarten through grade 5 residing in large part in the Farragut Housing project. Currently, 88% of the students are Title I eligible. The school is equally divided between male and female students. Approximately 75% of the students are African American and 25% are Hispanic. English language learners constitute 2% of the population. There are seventy-five students who are in special education classes. These classes consist of one inclusion class on six of the seven grades and two 12:1:1 classes. A little over one percent of the enrollment consists of students recently arrived in the country. The students are predominantly from Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Guyana. Student attendance is at 88.5% annually.

There are twenty-seven classroom teachers and five cluster teachers. There is an inclusion class in every grade except the third grade and two self-contained special education classes. Speech and English as a Second Language are taught by part-time faculty. The psychologist and social worker are also part-time employees.

The school has been designated as a Collaborative Community of Practice by the New York City Department of Education and has participated in the Teachers' College Reading and Writing Project.

PS 307 shares its building with a middle school, MS 313, which occupies the third floor.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The Principal is a well-respected professional who is determined to serve the children as well as the larger community beyond the school.
- School life has been enhanced with many extracurricular activities that support student engagement.
- Students are encouraged to develop a sense of civic values and community through student government.
- Parent representatives cited a much improved culture and climate as well as the increased efforts to meet the needs of the families served by the school.
- There is a clear focus on increasing academic rigor in order to challenge students at the appropriate level.
- Benchmarks for reading have been set and revised in order to track progress and performance of all students.
- Teachers are held responsible for creating Learning Goals for Underperforming Students.
- Student voices are valued and cultivated.
- The warm and attractive environment is conducive to learning for students and adults.
- The school has made good progress in creating and maintaining a safe and orderly culture within the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to strengthen the systematic use of quantitative data, particularly for sub-groups and categories of interest to the school.
- Build on professional development opportunities to continue to support teachers' ability to provide effective and differentiated instruction.
- Improve systems and structures for identification, monitoring and scheduling of interventions and strategies to support students with greatest needs.
- Extend the use of goal setting for individuals, subjects, classes and grades to provide focus and clarity to drive instruction.
- Extend strategies for youth development and parental involvement to address social and emotional needs of students and families.
- Refine the use of strategic planning as a meaningful tool that enables effective monitoring and evaluation of progress toward goals.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal is in her third year of leadership at PS 307 and has focused a great deal of her time and energy on creating a safe and orderly environment. She is dedicated to the community and to raising the level of academic rigor in the school.

There is a strong culture of collaboration between teachers at PS 307 that is led and supported by the principal. Teachers engage in collaborative planning of units of study and analyze student work in order to determine students' strengths and needs. Results of periodic assessments are used to determine if every child is moving academically and academic intervention services are provided after school for those in need of additional instruction. There is an emphasis on tracking individual student progress in reading and mathematics.

Leveled classroom libraries are the focal point of every classroom. The flow of the day is in evidence and the classrooms and hallways are print-rich and orderly environments.

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 proficient.

The school uses data from statewide and school assessments in order to examine grade levels in English Language Arts and mathematics for individual students, classrooms and for each grade tested. Periodic benchmarks have been set and individualized learning plans created for underperforming students. It has been noted by the school that Hispanic students perform better on statewide assessments than do black students. In addition, gender issues have been identified in that female students perform at higher levels than males, although the data is inconsistent. The school is aware of the need to strengthen the tracking and analysis of data for subgroups, especially the performance and progress of English language learners and special education students.

A needs assessment was conducted in order to focus on student behavior and attendance, two issues that have been of particular concern to the school community. Other categories of interest to the school have not yet been identified.

The principal compares data from PS 307 to other schools with similar populations. The school is partnered with a similar school to reflect on instructional practices as well. Report card trends revealed by state assessments in English and mathematics for all students and, in particular, for grade four students, are examined as is the growth of individual students over time.

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.

The school leadership team meets on an ongoing basis throughout the year to set goals for improvement that result in a Comprehensive Education Plan that is written collaboratively. Goals are included for the whole school as well as for all individual students. The performance and progress of disaggregated groups is reviewed but the school does not yet sufficiently use the analysis as part of its instructional planning. There is ongoing collaborative planning by teachers who analyze student work in order to plan.

Reading benchmarks were set and an Instructional Reading Level Tracking Sheet used for all students, including those in greatest need of improvement. These help teachers to set goals for each student. Students who need academic intervention services are scheduled for extended time where they receive additional instruction or homework help. A current school goal is to create a focus on the performing arts for the number of students who have strength in that area.

The principal wishes to raise the level of academic rigor. Parents feel that the school is committed to excellence and that expectations have been raised. Students believe that their teachers have high expectations for them and are aware of their individual plans for improvement. The implementation of rubrics is an instructional priority.

Extensive curriculum planning takes place each June when teams of teachers work collaboratively to create and modify units of study although goals for individual students, grades and subjects are not yet fully incorporated into curriculum planning. Through the efforts of the principal and the PTA, parents are more involved in planning.

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.

Individual student data is used to organize groups within the classroom in order to differentiate instruction so that students are provided with tasks at levels that provide appropriate academic challenges. Independent reading, book clubs and computer math games engage students as they work. Teachers’ ability to provide effectively differentiated instruction is still inconsistent and an area that the school is addressing through its professional development. Student assessment folders are compiled and reviewed in order to determine what the student does well and to build on those skills and knowledge. Consistency in the use of rubrics is another instructional priority for the school.

The school recognizes its strengths in English and math curricula and is now working towards implementing standards-based curricula in other subject areas, in particular social studies and science. Teachers are held accountable for test results and assessment folders provide periodic information as to individual progress towards the standard.

Scheduling of academic intervention services that require students to be “pulled-out” of their regular classrooms is being reviewed so that students will not miss instruction while receiving the individualized attention. A “push in” model is being considered in its place so that students will not leave their classrooms for extended periods of time.

Funding is allocated in the school’s budget to allow for participation in the Teachers’ College Readers’ and Writers’ Project. As a result of the analysis of data pertaining to the achievement of male students, the principal provided additional discretionary funding to individual teachers in order to support the acquisition of non-fiction books to interest male students. Substitute teachers are hired in June in order to provide teachers with the time to plan units of study for the following year.

Students know that there is an adult to whom each of them may go to ask for assistance if needed. Students cited extracurricular activities as being most engaging and supportive of academic subjects. The student government was created so that student voices can be heard and service to the community enhanced. Student accomplishments, such as public speaking awards and projects in which students lobbied for smaller class sizes, have been recognized as a source of pride by the community.

Student attendance is below expected levels for New York City elementary schools. However, the school is attempting to increase attendance rates by immediately contacting the home if a student is absent.

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 communicates high expectations when interviewing teachers by inquiring about values, professional growth and by requiring a demonstration lesson that is viewed by administrators and faculty. Professional development is offered to teachers beyond the school day in addition to opportunities for intervisitations and modeling of best practices conducted during the school day. The literacy coach has created a fifth grade model classroom which teachers are encouraged to visit.

Through professional development, the principal and assistant principal seek to build teachers’ capacity to use student data in order to differentiate instruction and are aware that this is an area that still needs to be strengthened. By conducting composite observations, the principal determined that the greatest support needed by teachers was to assist them in reaching low performing students who had been identified through ongoing assessments. As a result, the individual learning plans were developed. Common preparation periods allow teachers to share their plans and strategies. Math units of study were revised by the item analysis of unit tests and by looking at student work to determine misunderstandings. An arithmetic intervention was implemented school wide as a result. A weekly assessment revealed improvement. Professional development also focuses on the use of running records and conferencing in reading so that teachers are aware of each individual student’s strengths and areas in need of support.

Partnerships with outside agencies, e.g Teachers’ College Reading/Writing Project, Brooklyn Ballet, Chess in the Schools, and local politicians provide support for academic

goals. The extensive social and emotional needs of students and their families are addressed with part-time counseling.

The principal is respected by students, teachers and parents who credit her with creating a safer and more welcoming environment than her predecessor. The school is orderly and procedures are being implemented throughout PS 307 despite the difficulties involved with sharing a building with another 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.

Benchmarks for Instructional Reading Levels were set and revised to better monitor student progress and performance. A Degrees of Reading Achievement tracking sheet is used at the beginning of the school year to inform teachers of student data from the previous year so that there is continuity of instruction that begins promptly in September.

The school leadership team review data on a periodic basis, but does not yet consistently modify the goals in the school's strategic plan. The slower progress of special education students in self-contained classrooms compared to those in collaborative team-teaching classes is being monitored. Plans for English language learners who are being pulled-out of classrooms to receive support are also being revised so that students will not miss instruction in their primary classroom. The principal has reviewed teaching practice of balanced literacy and is considering reintroducing basal readers in classrooms where teachers have not shown proficiency in literacy practices. As a Collaborative Community of Practice school, PS 307 shares best practices with other schools that have been given the same designation.

A review of data in science and social studies necessitated a revision of plans to increase emphasis in these content areas. The principal is also emphasizing enrichment in order to increase rigor and attract new students moving to the area. A focus on performing arts is being developed as well in order to address areas of interest to students who have demonstrated talent in those areas.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Daniel Hale Williams School (PS 307)	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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 knows and respect students and responds 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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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	