



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Satellite West Middle School**

**Middle School 313**

**209 York Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11201**

**Principal: Charles Barrett Adams**

**Dates of review: April 12 - 13, 2007**

**Reviewer: Mary Ayala**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Satellite West Middle School serves 285 students in grades 6 through 8 in the borough of Brooklyn. The school occupies the third floor of Public School 307. The student body consists of 75% Black, 23% Hispanic and 3% White and Asian. The school has a small percentage of special education students (7%) and only 2 students who are English language learners. The percentage of students who are Title I eligible is 65.4%, which is slightly higher than similar schools but close to the percentage for all City schools.

Prior to the school's opening in 2004, Satellite West Middle School was an academy for the gifted and talented. Students now reflect the academic diversity of most New York City middle schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school uses a variety of data well in order to plan for improved student outcomes.
- The school responds with flexibility and agility to instructional needs identified by its frequent analysis of data.
- The principal motivates all members of the school community on behalf of improving student performance.
- The school plans strategically by focusing on a limited number of goals that are designed to accelerate student learning.
- Classrooms are well resourced to support improved student achievement.
- Improving student performance drives staffing, budgeting, and scheduling decisions.
- Professional development on behalf of improving student achievement is a balanced approach of accessing external expertise and developing internal competence.
- The school communicates well with and actively engages parents and caregivers in supporting accelerated academic achievement.

### What the school needs to improve

- Refine school improvement planning so that goals can be objectively measured.
- Use data better to analyze the performance of all groups within the school.
- Use data more strategically as a planning tool by developing comprehensive student profiles.
- Develop a more detailed way to monitor the impact of all intervention supports.
- Provide more opportunities for staff and students to contribute to improvement planning efforts.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

Satellite West Middle School is in its third year as a free-standing school and is making good progress in bringing its motto “Where we all get smarter” to fruition. Staff, parents and caregivers work together to make sure all students are well-prepared academically and socially for the demands of high school.

The school does a good job of gathering a variety of data and uses it well to plan for accelerated learning on behalf of all students. The school has chosen to focus on three key goals and has done well in using these goals to drive decisions about staffing, budgeting, and scheduling. As a result, classrooms are well-resourced and extra time is built into the schedule for either extra academic support or enrichment activities for students.

Staff, students, and parents appreciate the small size of the school and feel that it contributes to good communication, especially with regard to how well each student is doing. As a result, information about student progress is routinely shared and then used to make strategic decisions about teaching and learning.

### 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 does an excellent job gathering a variety of data to determine what each student knows and is able to do. This includes standardized tests, running records, level reading assessments, and practice tests. Once baseline information is gathered, periodic assessments are done so that student progress can be constantly updated. The school has done a good job identifying commercial assessments and designing their own assessments. Assessment data is presented in a variety of formats such as graphs and charts so that teachers can make good use of the information for planning their next steps. For the coming year, staff has developed a literacy assessment timeline and will continue to develop assessments for social studies, science, and foreign language.

The school has used data well to understand and compare the performance of individual students, classes, and grades. For example, when a baseline assessment showed significant gaps in students’ mathematics knowledge in a specific grade, staff developed their own curriculum to remediate the situation and accelerate student learning. As a result, a significant number of students scored well on a Regents level examination.

In addition, the school has used data well to identify struggling students and put appropriate supports in place, including but not limited to special education students and English language learners. The school considers its progress against its own past performance and also in relation to the performance of similar schools. However, the school does not currently use its data to analyze the performance of students by ethnic group.

**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.**

English language arts and mathematics teachers set measurable goals for the progress of their students and classes. For example, all homerooms have posted “stamina charts” that identify how students are increasing the amount of time they devote to independent reading. However, overall school improvement planning originates primarily with the principal. Consequently, the three goals of the Comprehensive Education Plan are not ‘known to all members of the community.’ In addition, there are no measurable outcomes and timelines attached to the goals so that progress can be sufficiently monitored.

As part of its goal of “an accelerated and rigorous curriculum for all students,” the school does a good job planning for the progress of individual students, classes and grades. Frequent interim assessments are well-used to identify gaps in what has been taught and to identify which students need additional help. The principal uses one-on-one conferences and feedback from classroom observations to provide teachers with suggestions about classroom practices that might improve academic achievement.

The school has planned well for addressing the needs of struggling students. The weekly schedule has been designed to allow for 90 minutes of additional targeted support for students who are falling behind. The help is provided in small groups and is usually delivered by teachers who know the work of the identified students.

High expectations are well communicated to students, parents and caregivers. A variety of visuals, newsletters, and celebrations reinforce the school’s motto “Where we all get smarter.” Students note that class work is challenging and that teachers push them to work harder.

Although the specific goals of the Comprehensive Education Plan are not ‘known to all members of the community’, understanding how to improve student performance drives the work of school leaders, staff, students, and parents. As one parent notes, “The school really reaches out.” This includes such activities as a 6th grade orientation, literacy nights, and a website explaining the mathematics curriculum.

**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 does well in selecting curriculum and supplemental materials that provide meaningful data about student progress. Teachers use a combination of commercial products and teacher-made tools that make it possible to continuously measure how well students are progressing. For example, mathematics teachers use “Math Explanation Sheets” and “Identify the Error Sheets” to make sure students understand the skills and concepts being taught. In addition, a new science curriculum has an assessment component that can be customized for each class.

The school effectively holds teachers accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. Teachers participate in content area meetings to analyze performance data

and to design units of study. In addition, they are asked to develop their own SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time bound) goals. Although not all teachers participate in this exercise, those who do benefit from the feedback provided by the principal. Teachers are also expected to provide written explanations and improvement plans for any students who fail their courses.

The school ensures that staffing, budgeting, and scheduling decisions drive all efforts to improve student achievement. The goals of the Comprehensive Education Plan are supported with budget allocations. As a result, more books have been purchased for the library and individual classrooms so that the balanced literacy curriculum can be implemented with fidelity. The principal has used his staffing allocation and daily schedule strategically to address needs identified by examining student data. For example, an extra 90 minutes per week is built into the schedule and can be used for enrichment or intervention. Those students who participate in intervention support during this time period receive instruction in small groups, frequently with their own content area teacher.

As a result of planning and sharing, teachers are able to provide engaging instructional programs that support the school's high expectations. Teachers appreciate the flexibility and creativity they are afforded in lesson design and students appreciate teachers' efforts to explain the material and make it applicable to real life. Consequently, students are on task in their classrooms and making the effort necessary to improve their knowledge and skills.

Students are well supported in this school with regard to both their academic and personal needs. They can take advantage of the morning school, after school programs, Saturday school and the 90 minute intervention period if they are experiencing difficulty with coursework. Students also feel there are staff they can talk to if personal difficulties are interfering with school work.

The importance of daily attendance is a message that is well dispersed throughout this school. An automated phone message system calls the homes of absentees and tardy students on a daily basis. In addition, the guidance counselor and parent coordinator talk to tardy students. As a result, the average daily attendance rate is just over 90%.

**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 school is successfully developing the capacity of all staff to have a positive impact on student performance. New teachers are selected based on a variety of criteria, all of which involve high expectations for student performance. Once hired, they are thoughtfully mentored and inducted into the school's practice of using data for instructional planning.

Teachers are able to participate in quality professional development opportunities that are individualized with a good balance of external offerings and on-site expertise. Teachers take good advantage of working with each other, coaches, and consultants in order to analyze data and plan for improved student outcomes.

The principal frequently visits classrooms and provides formal and informal feedback to teachers. Formal feedback is of excellent quality and provides numerous suggestions about how to improve teaching and learning.

In addition to feedback from the principal, teachers also benefit from the opportunity to meet in content area teams. They are able to discuss their goals, talk about their work and learn from each other. However, working on behalf of broader school goals is less developed and less dispersed throughout the school. In addition, students feel that their voice is not always heard since there is no student government operating this year. As a result, all members of the school community are not sufficiently aligned and engaged in planning for improved performance.

The principal is well respected and acknowledges the need to involve staff more actively in improvement planning in order to effect deeper changes. Teachers appreciate the flexibility he affords them and the support he provides. Parents believe that he is an “advocate for children” and one student referred to him as “inspiring.” The school runs smoothly and weekly communications ensure that procedures and policies are understood and followed.

The school does a good job of providing students with after school and summer activities that support the achievement of academic goals. Students can take part in a ‘History Honors Club’ and a ‘Regents Prep’ program, both of which provide for accelerated learning.

**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 uses a variety of interim assessments well in order to monitor student progress and revise practice to meet its goal of accelerated learning for all students. Baseline information in English language arts and mathematics is gathered on all students at the beginning of each year. Throughout the year, interim assessments, practice tests, and a review of report card grades are used to determine how well students, classes, and grades are progressing.

Teachers meet in content area teams in order to discuss interim assessment data and then plan for adjustments. The school has acted thoughtfully in using assessments that can be scored quickly so the resulting data can be used for planning purposes. The mathematics coach has taken an active role in preparing charts and graphs that make it possible to identify instructional issues quickly. As a result, teachers are able to try different classroom approaches to ensure better results.

When an analysis of data reveals less than satisfactory student progress, the school responds quickly to fix the situation. Responses may include school wide changes, curriculum adjustments, additional professional development or targeted support for specific students.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Satellite West Middle School (MS 313)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<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>			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"> <li>• ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>	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"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		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.

<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.	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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<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	