



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Walter Weaver Elementary School

Public School 398

**60 E 94 Street
Brooklyn
NY 11212**

Principal: Diane Danay-Caban

Dates of review: April 19 - 20, 2007

Reviewer: Richard Woolf

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Walter Weaver Elementary School is a kindergarten through grade 5 school serving approximately 515 students. It is currently under utilized on capacity, although a number of parents have re-enrolled their children since the new principal has been in place. The school has been open for a number of years while the current administration has only been in place for nine months. During this period significant changes have taken place, especially in the development of class instruction and behavioral strategies.

The population of the school is made up of 5% Hispanic, 93% Black with Asian, White and other at 2%. The female population, at 47% is lower than similar schools and subsequently the male percentage is higher at 53%. The number of English language learners is approximately 4% and is lower than both similar and City schools. Special education students make up 24% of the school population and is high compared to similar schools and higher than City schools. Student attendance is now at 92% which is comparable to both similar and City schools, which is a 3% increase from last year. The school receives Title 1 funding for 79% of the students and this comparable with similar schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Under the leadership of the new principal, the school is well organized.
- The staff is more willing, able and confident to move the school forward.
- There are great displays of student art work in the hallways and classrooms
- The students are respectful of adults and each other.
- Parents are happy about recent changes and are supportive of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a Comprehensive Education Plan, broken down into realistic action plans, which can be more carefully monitored.
- Further detail analysis of data which can be broken down by specific groups.
- Develop ways in which the curriculum can be enriched and broadened to cover both non academic and academic areas.
- Continue to develop positive behavior strategies appropriate to the classroom and general building.
- Develop strategies to raise attendance rates.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal, who is an experienced educator, has only been in position for nine months but in that time she has demonstrated strong leadership which is valued by the staff, the parents and the students. She is determined that the school will deliver an academic program that enhances the opportunities of each student. The improvements seen over the last nine months have been appreciated and valued by the entire school community. Through the more effective use of data, the staff is being challenged to rethink their approach to differentiation. This approach is fully endorsed by senior colleagues who are acting as the change agents alongside the principal. The principal is increasingly aware that she has the opportunity to further develop her senior colleagues' professional development and as a team take the school further forward to create an establishment respected by the local community. The increasing use of data is starting to provide classroom teachers with the information they need to help them raise academic achievements.

Parents are increasingly aware of the efforts being made by the staff to raise their children's expectations and prepare them for the next steps in their educational life. The school has very good links with supportive outside agencies and this is beginning to have a positive impact on the school.

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.

Despite the principal having only been in position for nine months she is developing a climate where staff are being challenged and expected to make effective use of all available data. The school uses all data as accorded by the State and City tests as a basis to plan teaching groups and to identify students in need of extra support and guidance. Extra data from Princeton Review and the school's internal running records demonstrate how the school is generating information to identify the work it undertakes with its English language learners and special education students. For those students displaying particular needs, a system of additional support has been established through the use of specialist teachers as well as outside school agencies.

Each assistant principal is charged with overseeing the work at grade level and the coaches are using the data to drive forward lesson planning and professional development. The school does not analyze other groups such as gender and its higher performing students. Work has been undertaken by the use of visiting other schools of a similar nature to further compare and enhance the work of this school. As data generation, to affect instruction, was limited under the previous administration the school has made huge strides in the last nine months to change this around. This had a significant impact upon the instruction of students and is welcomed by the staff. The administration

acknowledges that there is still work to be carried out to achieve the status of well developed but for their efforts to date they are deservedly proficient.

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 improved use of data is having a positive effect on staff instruction. The development of weekly common planning time for all grades is greatly appreciated by the staff as another tool to enhance their instruction. These meetings also act as an early warning system for students who may be falling behind in their work or are experiencing difficulties.

By more effective use of the running records staff members have up to date knowledge of the progress their students are making and can call upon specialist help when issues are identified. For example, a psychologist and outside consultants in English language arts and mathematics were hired as a result of issues that were identified in the running records. The school’s extended day program further enables students to benefit from smaller group work and the academic intervention services help to prepare children moving into grade 3. This kind of focused attention helps students and teachers address areas that are in need of improvement.

The wealth of new data is impacting on instruction as demonstrated by the grade level meetings. The level of debate is focused on how to improve student understanding and development. The work of the coaches and intervention services are also assisting in developing both staff and student aspirations towards high achievement.

Presently the school does not have a Comprehensive Education Plan which reflects the goals of staff, parents and other members of the school community. Parents, though, are encouraged to be active partners in their child’s learning.

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 offers a balanced curriculum in English language arts, mathematics, art, physical education and technology. Positive Behavior Intervention Support has been introduced in the school to enhance learning.

There is evidence of good teaching which engages the students as active learners. Teachers are using data to assist in differentiation. However, this is not consistent across all grade levels. The standard of work on display in classrooms and hallways is exemplary. The students are aware of the high expectations the school holds for them. They have a great deal of respect for their teachers and principal and there is always an adult prepared to help them. Staff members are accountable for their student’s progress as is evidenced by the running records.

The principal has analyzed the school's data and as a result has used the budget to bring in programs which are both needs based and developmental. Her decision to employ an additional art teacher next September would bear this out. Scheduling takes place to suit specific needs. For example, grades 3 and 4 have two lessons of science in preparation for City testing.

Attendance figures are rising and now are comparable to other City schools. The school has also added a number of incentives to encourage attendance. Students feel the school is now a safer place since September and the number of behavioral incidents have similarly decreased. Parents are aware of the role the principal is playing in seeking to set high standards and are supportive as they see her efforts impacting upon their children.

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's hiring policy is very clear in that new staff have to be personable, knowledgeable and intrinsic learners themselves. She is building a team of individuals who appreciate and understand that their students can succeed in life by being given a positive and encouraging start. The decisions taken by the principal to improve all facets of student learning have made the staff feel more trusted and valued. There are good opportunities for professional development both within the school and outside, with the use of external consultants. The data and professional development generated from this venture is impacting upon instruction and understanding of student need. The open design of the school building has some draw backs and in the past this has caused staff problems, however plans are in place to overcome these issues. The positive side has been the ability to group grade level classes adjacent to each other which has facilitated inter visitations and collaboration amongst staff.

The principal sets high standards and demonstrates these to the whole school community on a daily basis. She is respected for being approachable and is a constant presence in the school. She visits staff informally as well as conducts formal classroom observations. She has detailed knowledge of her staff. The school is well managed and organized, which has encouraged learning. Parents are responding more favorably as the new management establishes itself. The principal is cognizant of this and recognizes the vital role parents play in working in partnership with the school.

Excellent links are being established with outside agencies such as the Foster Grandparent program and the Jackie Robinson Foundation after school program which positively impacts students learning. Within the school the Positive Behavior Intervention Support program and weekly assemblies are in place to encourage positive attitudes amongst the students.

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 undeveloped.

The school does not have a Comprehensive Education Plan that reflect the goals and ambitions of the new administration. Teams within the school meet to discuss the effectiveness of instructional programs. Similarly, comparisons are made of student progress across classrooms and grades to measure whether specific programs were having the required impact. The coaches are developing methods to monitor against interim goals but the approach is not systematic. The school demonstrates that some planning takes place but its impact upon instruction is limited due to a lack of monitoring.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Walter Weaver Elementary School (PS 398)	∅	✓	+
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		