



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

William Sherman School

Public School 087

**160 West 78th Street
New York
NY 10024**

Principal: Jacqui Getz

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Reviewer: Bruce Berry

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The William Sherman School is an elementary school with 875 students, covering grades kindergarten through 5, with an ethnic breakdown of 46% White, 27% Hispanic, 23% Black and 4% Asian. Six percent of students are English language learners while a further 8% are special education students.

The attendance rate has improved since the 2004/5 figure of 94.5%, when it was equal to that for similar schools and greater than that for City schools. There was an increase of new arrivals at the school in 2004-5.

The principal took up the post of acting principal in July 2006 and was appointed to the post of principal in November 2006.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is highly respected by all members of the school community and by the parents.
- The principal has initiated some significant and positive changes in her short time in post.
- The strategic vision, as set out in the Comprehensive Education Plan, has appropriate objectives, goals and timescales to enhance the quality of education throughout the school.
- The school has highly effective practices for meeting the needs of English language learners and special education students.
- The school has a caring family culture.
- The school has a strong partnership with the parent community, who are very supportive of the school.
- The students of the school have very good attendance.
- Teachers demonstrate an energy and commitment to raising student achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish a consistency in the use of the whole school policy and practice for assessment and goal setting at all levels across the school.
- Continue with the development of consistent classroom practice in which the analysis of student performance data informs planning and differentiated instruction.
- Continue to develop goal setting practices at individual student, classroom, grade and whole school level, with clearly defined success criteria and completion timeframes.
- Ensure that all plans, assessments, goal setting and interventions are monitored and evaluated regularly so that their impact on improving student achievement is consistently maintained.
- Research ways of bridging the gap between the different achievement levels of the ethnic groups in the school.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school, with some areas for further development.

Strategic leadership at the school is strong, but the principal, having been in post only a few months, needs time to bring about the changes necessary to have an impact on raising achievement. She has made a good start and has already gained the respect and confidence of staff, pupils, and parents.

The school curriculum is appropriate with the school following the regional program of Accelerated Literacy Learning and the Everyday Mathematics scheme. The tracking of progress of English language learners and special education students is in place and the process works well at all levels. However, the systematic use of assessment data and goal setting across the school has only recently been established and, as yet, practices are not fully established.

The school operates well on a day-to-day basis and has a very caring family culture, a view shared by students and parents alike. Students enjoy school and, as a result, attendance is consistently high.

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 undeveloped.

The school has just begun to analyze the data at pupil level from City and State tests and the Princeton Reviews to identify areas of strength and areas for further development and to compare its performance with others in similar situations, but these processes are very new and have yet to impact significantly on the work of the school. The school does not, as yet, look in detail at the relative performance of sub groups, particularly different ethnic groupings.

Teachers assess and track student progress, set goals and adjust instruction, but practices vary in their quality and complexity from class to class. Common assessment policies and procedures have recently been introduced by the principal to improve consistency across grade levels and from grade to grade as students move through the school.

The support for special education students is highly effective. Data is used very well to track the progress of these students and details are discussed and evaluated at regular meetings of the pupil personnel team. The special education teacher support service works closely with classroom teachers to help meet the students' identified needs. Pull outs for small groups are used, with other teachers pushing in, as required. The principal has recently added another strand to these very effective procedures by introducing a very effective referral system for teachers to capture in detail the reasons behind each referral.

The assessment, goal setting, support, and teaching for English language learners is very effective in meeting the needs of the students. English language learners are integrated carefully into general education classes. They are assessed on entry to the school and their support program is determined by the outcomes of this assessment. Pull out support is used, with the allocated time matched to the identified needs of each student.

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, with some key areas for future development.

The principal has introduced plans and processes which are beginning to address the development of goal setting alongside the use of a whole school assessment policy. At present, consistency has not been achieved across the school, although there are examples of good practice in classes and across grades. The principal recognizes that it will take time to establish consistency of practice across the school and to further raise achievement for all students. She is relentless in her pursuit of high achievement and attends all of the monthly grade meetings that have now been established. The current focus of these meetings is the importance of consistency in the use of data and goal setting to raise achievement.

The school has effective procedures in place for improving the performance and monitoring the progress of special education students, English language learners and other students identified with particular needs. When students are referred, they are put on the ‘at risk’ category and monitored against agreed interventions and targets for six weeks by the pupil personnel team. Depending on progress, students can be recommended for formal assessment. The school staff has high expectations of the students. Parents are invited to formal meetings during the year, but the school welcomes parents at any time to discuss their children’s progress. The school has introduced the weekly parental newspaper, which is highly praised by parents because they now feel involved in the life of the school. Parents believe that the school had been galvanized by the new principal, following five years of uncertainty, with three different principals during that time.

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, with some well-developed features.

The school curriculum is appropriately balanced and focused on raising achievement, with the school following the regional program of Accelerated Literacy Learning and the Everyday Mathematics scheme. There is evidence in all curriculum areas of some good practice at individual teacher level in the use of data and goal setting. This leads to curriculum realignment at class level based on the data outcomes. At monthly grade meetings, teachers analyze available data to evaluate student achievement and progress and the effectiveness of instructional practices. In this way staff are held accountable for the progress that is made by all the students in their charge. The new initiatives introduced by the principal have not yet had time become consistently embedded in

practice. There is some very good evidence of teacher planning and of differentiation based on classroom assessment of student progress. Teachers' conferencing with students adds support to the assessment outcomes. As a result, individual or group support is used to address identified areas for further development.

Budgetary decisions are made in line with identified areas for development, but the principal recognizes that budgetary decisions will be strengthened by a more rigorous analysis of data across the school. Staffing is deployed effectively across the school. The school has a part-time literacy coach who works with staff when areas for development are identified. The principal also works with individual teachers and has taught model lessons to enhance the teachers' skills and knowledge. Students are fully engaged in lessons and are able to articulate the activities they are doing in response to teachers' expectations of the outcomes of those activities. Great respect exists between teachers and students and there is a caring family culture in the school, a view reinforced by the parents. Attendance at the school has been consistently good for many years.

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, with some well-developed features.

The procedures for the selection of teachers to the school are very thorough. Following an initial screening process, model lessons are taught by applicants and evaluated by the principal and a team of staff. A selection panel, including the principal, parents and teachers, interview prospective candidates and cover a range of areas including teaching, learning and the way data and goals play a part in improving achievement.

Professional development is now firmly focussed on raising achievement and is targeted on the development of the consistent use of data and its impact on instructional practice. The school is part of the 'learning leaders' project which is focussed on developing reading. The literacy coach works with teachers, as does the principal, who has undertaken mini-lessons to demonstrate good practice. The principal frequently observes lessons, both formally and informally. The outcomes from lesson observations lead to the further directed support from both the literacy coach and the principal. Planning and evaluation of data is beginning to be undertaken in a more consistent way, but, as yet, is in the early stages of development. The leadership team analyze the outcomes from the City and State tests and are beginning to inform teachers of those outcomes. Monthly grade level meetings have been established, with the principal attending all meetings in order to drive the agenda of strengthening the use of data to secure improved outcomes for students.

The principal is well respected by all members of the school and by the parents. The parents firmly believe that the principal has galvanized the whole community and the teachers feel that the school now has a real sense of leadership. The students judge that the principal is very friendly and has changed things for the better. The school operates very well on a day-to-day basis and has clear procedures, which are followed by all of the school community. Support services are utilised effectively in support of students, as seen in the pupil personnel team, where outside agencies support the school in creating clear action plans for students with identified needs.

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 principal's strategic leadership and management are very strong. She has clearly defined highly appropriate objectives in the school's Comprehensive Education Plan for moving the school forward and raising achievement. In her short time in post, the principal has quickly established and implemented plans and processes for the improved use and analysis of data to raise achievement. The meeting structure has now been established so that all staff can play a part in the delivery of these key objectives. The highest priority is to embed effective practices based upon the policy for assessment and goal setting across the school.

Assessment and comparisons of student progress take place at classroom level and the introduction of the new assessment and goal setting strategies are beginning to have an impact on raising achievement, but they have not had time to be fully established or to achieve consistency of practice.

Strategic plans and goals are beginning to be translated into practice. Some very positive steps have been taken by the principal in a short space of time to move the agenda linking consistent assessment and goal setting to improved student achievement. She recognizes, however, that more work and time are needed to get consistency in practice at all levels throughout the school.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: William Sherman School (PS 087)	∅	✓	+
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 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.	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		