



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Shorac Kappock Elementary School**

**Public School 98**

**512 West 212 Street  
New York  
NY 10034**

**Principal: Ms. Maritza A. Rodriguez**

**Dates of review: January 31 - February 2, 2007**

**Reviewer: Renee Middleton**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Shorac Kappock Elementary School (PS 98) has been an integral part of the Inwood community in the Bronx for over 84 years. It currently serves 629 students from pre-kindergarten to grade 4.

Hispanic students make up 96.3% of the total enrolment with a remaining 3.7% representing a mix of other groups in the student population. There are 32 special education students (5%) and 303 (48%) English language learners. The predominant language of new arrival students to the school is Spanish. Attendance is above the City and similar school averages (94.2%). All students are Title 1 eligible which is above the City average.

The school has optimized stability amongst its teaching staff through very good collaboration systems, instructional guidance, and professional support. However, there has been a large turnover rate in administration. The current principal has been in post for 5 months.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Staff work together well as a team by encouraging all students to aim high.
- The school is making a good start in its use of data to track students' achievement to inform and accelerate their learning.
- The principal and staff have created a very positive learning environment as evident in classrooms, bulletin displays, and through the effective use of available resources.
- Teachers, coaches, intervention services, and paraprofessionals work very hard to make sure that every child is supported well.
- Collaboration amongst teachers and school leaders enhance instruction strategies and learning opportunities for students.
- The school provides effective intervention and teaching strategies for English language learners, gifted and talented students, and special education students.
- The school has built a strong partnership with parents, the community, and other providers to raise cultural awareness and expand students' learning opportunities.
- Parents actively support the school and are very appreciative of the quality of care, instruction, curriculum workshops, and events that the school offers.
- The parent coordinator effectively reaches out to parents and is improving communication between home and school.
- Students behave well and their attendance is above the City average and that of similar schools.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to improve communication with parents and students by giving them a better understanding of the goals set for individual students.
- Continue professional development in the disaggregation, analysis, and use of data to inform the planning and instruction to address the different abilities of students.
- Develop whole school systems to refine the school's ability to compare the performance of groups of students by gender, classrooms, subject areas, grade levels; and with similar schools in order to monitor trends in students' academic performance over time.
- To review priorities identified in the Comprehensive Education Plan and revise actions based on analysis of data, lesson observations, and progress against measurable interim goals.
- Raise achievement in science through curriculum alignment, application of scientific processes, and the development of cross curriculum links to literacy and numeracy.
- To establish skill-based rubrics from English language arts and mathematics to impact on other subjects and to use the information to set work that provides the right level of challenge for students of different abilities.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### This is a proficient school

The recently appointed principal has effectively managed smooth transition from the previous administration and has effectively established her own vision for the school. The school is clearly focused on student achievement and is guided by her strategic leadership. Under her leadership, the school has introduced effective systems for the gathering of data, the monitoring of teaching and learning, the deployment of intervention services and instructional support to accelerate students' learning. The school is settled with established policies and practices within a positive climate for learning.

Positive strides have been made in raising parents' expectations, improving the quality of teaching, and enhancing students' learning opportunities through programs for the gifted and talented and intervention strategies to address students' academic strengths and needs. With growing stability, staff are making positive contributions to the school's improvement in students' academic progress and achievement.

Staff know students well, and there is a mutually respectful culture which promotes good relationships amongst all adults and students in the school. Teachers further their understanding and use of data through focused professional development opportunities offered by the school. However, differentiation is not embedded in subject areas and the science curriculum needs further alignment. Parents are supportive of the steps taken by the school with their active involvement in their children's education. Staff and parents acknowledge the principal's determination, understanding of the school's community, and communication about what the school must do to improve further. There is no complacency in the school as exemplified in the continued improvements in City and State testing results and above average attendance rates.

#### 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 has begun effective collection and analysis of data by using the information gathered from the State and City examinations, Princeton Review, Developmental Reading Assessment, running records, teachers' own assessments, standardized diagnostic tests, and conferring notes. All classroom teachers have literacy and math portfolios to ensure that all the students' work is collected and assessed. The school gathers additional data through collaborative data scrutiny and the school leaders' formal lesson observations and informal 'walk-throughs.'

Teachers are aware of the progress of individual students on a day-to-day basis and there are frequent discussion between teachers about the performance, behavior and personal development of students. Teachers administer teacher-designed tests to check the skills and understanding students have learned as a result of their teaching, and use these to

make decisions about what needs to be re-emphasized. The school has adopted the America's Choice workshop model which provides baseline assessment of students' skills in English language arts and mathematics. However, the use of objective testing is less consistent in science to provide an accurate picture of students' achievement.

The principal and the school's cabinet review the performance of various groups, for example, gifted and talented students, as well as those students with language and mathematics needs. Yet there are inconsistencies in how teachers analyze and share information, as part of their discussions about the effectiveness of teaching strategies. Information and data gathered are not consistently across the school to set personal goals consistently for students.

The performance of special educational students is tracked well through their individual education plans. However, there is insufficient analysis of longitudinal performance data or comparison with other schools used to inform differentiation across all subjects and grouping of students in lessons especially relating to the performance of boys compared to girls, or the analysis of the English language learners' data determining their proficiency in English and Spanish.

**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's staff work collaboratively and support one another well. There is a high level of commitment to the school and their students. There is an extremely positive culture of mutual support among teachers, and information about teaching strategies as well as students' progress and outcomes is shared constantly. Although teachers are aware of the performance of their students, the information gathered is not sufficiently disaggregated or consistently used to set specific goals for individual students. There is much variance in how teachers' feedback on students' work.

Students do not always understand the components of the marks they receive or what they need to do to improve and reach proficiency within the academic levels. For example, most students know their independent reading levels, yet teachers do not specify in their planning and conference notes which skills are developed within each reading level so that they can share and know when students are ready to move to another level. The expansion and use of rubrics are in early stages of development to focus teachers' assessments and conferencing with students and parents.

The data indicates that many students enter the school with comparatively low levels in English language development. However, the school has intense intervention strategies implemented for English language learners that effectively address these issues and accelerate students' learning. Partnerships are cohesively formed with outside agencies and neighborhood services. Meetings are held weekly to monitor the effectiveness of actions taken and the impact of strategies and resources implemented for those students in most need, including services for special education students.

Parents praise the work of the principal and staff, describing the school as 'una comunidad positiva', or 'a positive community.' The school is beginning to implement curriculum workshops and conferences with parents to demonstrate the curriculum standards and skills taught, understanding the testing components, and raising their expectations.

Parents welcome further details in the information they receive relating to their children's progress and academic achievement against the standards with explanation of leveling, and curriculum content.

**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.**

Teachers are accountable to the principal and to each other as they discuss their students' performance and share strategies. Although data is used to plan what needs to be reinforced, especially in English language arts and mathematics, there is still some inconsistency in teachers' overall planning for differentiated instruction to ensure that learning is closely targeted to individual students.

The school's budget and decisions about resources and staffing are linked to performance data and priorities to improve what students learn, such as the addition of manipulatives in mathematics and exploratory science resources. Staff are carefully assigned to subject areas and teaching groups to make the best of their strengths.

The learning environment is productive, students behave well, and there is mutual respect within the school community. Throughout the school, students work hard and show commitment to their studies. Students are confident that there is support for them in their academic work and for personal issues. Procedures to promote good attendance are effective, and attendance is above that of similar schools and the City average.

Children's learning is accelerated through the enhancement programs that complement the core curriculum. The after-school programs include literacy and numeracy support for students. These programs are well attended by students. To raise cultural awareness and pride in the Hispanic heritage, Ballet Hispanico provides the students with greater understanding of the Hispanic culture, dance, and Spanish language through the arts. The music curriculum is enhanced through the Music in the Brain program which exposes students to music with practical application and development of thinking skills. The school has partnership with a number of City and neighborhood providers. The City Hall Academy provides students with the opportunity to engage in project based instruction. The students learn through a myriad of hands on activities, trips, authentic literature and then share what they learned with their peers. It provides students with a different way of learning and the teachers with a different style of teaching.

**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 new principal, in her short time in the school, has sustained effective systems for managing the school. Staff respect her capability to lead the school and in setting challenging goals for its improvement. The school runs smoothly under her guidance.

With the existing stability of the staff, the principal has not had to appoint staff, but systems are in place in the event of changes. Teachers and key staff have active roles in decision making and have a clear view of the school's priorities. Discussions are in process for the

development of testing strategies for English language learners and science curriculum alignment to new requirements.

Professional development is aligned to student performance and address whole school priorities. The school provides opportunity for 'turnkey' dissemination from courses staff attend, follow-up from the literacy and mathematics coaches to model lessons, and proficient budgeting for relevant resources.

The principal and assistant principal visit classes informally on a regular basis, and know teachers' strengths and areas for development. The principal follows an established system of observations as required for tenured teachers. Teachers receive collaborative prep and planning time which allows them opportunities for working together, discuss instructional strategies, and update on students' progress.

**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 Comprehensive Education Plan was drawn up by the previous administration. The school has since made careful changes through reviews and revision to reflect current priorities such as the challenges to new testing arrangements for English language learners and for the enhancement of the science curriculum. The new principal and her cabinet effectively monitor and review the actions taken in meeting the Comprehensive Education Plan goals. However, the action plan is not consistently informed by student performance data and measurable goals. There are limited interim goals to measure the progress the school is making. Although there is a list of school leaders responsible for meeting goals, the plan does not provide real accountability for implementation of tasks. For example, no clear timescales are identified for completion of specific tasks or actions and systems for evaluating outcomes are not always precise enough to pinpoint exact expectations.

The staff and parents have confidence in the principal's informed and professional judgments. They value the good communication she provides about what the school is doing to raise student achievement. The continued scrutiny and disaggregation of data is beginning to better inform decisions. The principal's priority to make the curriculum standards explicit and accessible for all students and parents aims to raise the whole school community's expectations.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Shorac Kappock Elementary School (PS 98)</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 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. 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>	<b>∅</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</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>	<b>∅</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</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>	<b>∅</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</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 each successive phase of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve students' academic outcomes.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	