



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Mary D Carter School

Public School 151

**50-05 31 Avenue
Queens
NY 11377**

Principal: John J Bono Jr

Dates of review: February 14 - 15, 2007

Reviewer: Terry Turner

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Mary D Carter School has recently become an empowerment school and takes students from pre-kindergarten through to grade 5. Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

The number of students currently enrolled is 667. The school is situated in the center of a rapidly growing and changing multicultural area. Approximately 49% of the students are Hispanic, 22% are Asian, 15% are Black, 12% are White, and 2% are from other groups. The school has 112 special education students, 17%, of whom 51 are in self-contained classrooms. There are 152 English language learners, 23%, the majority of whom speak Spanish. The school receives Title 1 funding.

Attendance has remained fairly constant over the last 4 years at approximately 92%, broadly average for similar schools and just below the City-wide average. The climate in the school is very calm and orderly and very few students have been suspended in recent years.

The school has been very proactive in securing a number of substantial grants. These have been well used for the benefit of the students and include a new library and science laboratory. The building is 75 years old but is kept in good order with appealing displays and an abundance of resources.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Good use is made of quantitative data from external tests to assess students' performance and progress.
- Additional information on students' performance is gathered to complement the data from external tests.
- Plans are modified as a result of information gathered through conferencing with students.
- Efficient systems are in place to coordinate and oversee the academic intervention service team's work.
- Literacy skills are enhanced through the well-established arts program.
- Effective use is made of a wide range of resources, including computers and electronic whiteboards.
- Initiatives, like developing data portfolios, are sensibly piloted prior to full implementation.
- Appropriate adaptations are made to the curriculum in the light of students' identified needs.
- Staff respond well to students' personal and academic needs.
- Additional support has been provided for those identified as being in greatest need.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that programs for English language learners and special education students are sufficient and effective enough to meet their needs.
- Continue to develop staff expertise in the analysis and interpretation of data.
- Develop greater consistency in keeping running records and conference notes.
- Provide more opportunities for parents to become familiar with accessing on-line data relating to their child's achievements.
- Make better use of the development plan to drive up levels of achievement.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with well-developed features.

The school has become very proficient at gathering a whole range of information about students' achievements and using this to good effect. Teachers, parents and students are now able to access the results of external tests on line. The school intends to provide a training program so that parents and teachers can gain the maximum benefit from this facility.

Using data to identify the groups of students that are in greatest need of improvement has been a relatively straightforward exercise for the school. The proportions of English language learners and special education students have increased significantly in recent years. Data indicates that their needs in the past have not been fully met. The academic intervention team has already implemented strategies with the aim of ensuring that these students' needs are addressed.

Teachers are aware that the gains made by some special education students or English language learners may not be very discernible. For example, to move a student from a low level 2 to a high level 2 may be quite an achievement. Hence senior leaders are seeking ways to acknowledge or measure these small gains.

The school is extremely well staffed by a team of highly competent and dedicated professionals. It is very evident that staffing decisions relate directly to the needs revealed by student data. Relationships between students and staff are cordial and respectful. Parents are well aware that the interest of students is central to all school decisions.

The development plan is potentially an effective instrument for implementing change, driving up achievement and generating meaningful data. However, no one person, apart from the principal, is currently accountable for the success of each school goal.

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 makes very good use of quantitative data from external tests and from self-generated assessments. These provide teachers with a clear picture of the performance of each student, classroom and grade level. The school is already seeking ways to customize some of the on-line tests that it uses so that having identified individual weakness or areas of misunderstanding, teachers can constantly update their knowledge and understanding of students' progress

The school is beginning to make reasonable use of available data to evaluate the performance of English language learners and special education students. It is also seeking to find different ways of enabling students with limited skills in English language

arts to access information and complete set tasks. Special education students are given additional help and guidance with their work. There is a determination in the school that an increased focus must be placed on these two groups of students.

Teachers are making good use of a wide range of data. They are generating information on all identifiable groups in the school, for example real or perceived differences in performance between boys and girls. There is also an acute awareness that data can be used to measure elements of school life or aspects of performance that are not necessarily academic, for example, patterns of student absences or identifying how best to identify and deal with those students who may be in danger or at risk.

The school is proficient at comparing and contrasting its performance over time and differences between classrooms. Grade level meetings are used well to determine which students are under performing and in which subjects, although analysis on the basis of ethnicity receives less focus.

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 makes good use of the data to set goals for short-term improvement within carefully conceived plans. For example, all teachers set goals and chart students’ progress through the adopted reading program. There are collaborative plans to set measurable goals for students in English language arts, mathematics and science. The good collaboration between English language arts and performing arts enables students’ literacy skills to be reinforced in different contexts.

The planning cycle in the school is measured and coherent. There is clearly a focus on each individual student in terms of setting goals that are challenging but realistic. Students are aware of these goals and in many cases they are involved in setting them. There are targets for grade levels where the focus is on moving students from levels 1 and 2 through to level 3. This then leads to whole-school targets where the school knows what it has to achieve in order to meet the adequate yearly performance target.

The school provides many opportunities for parents and caregivers to share and provide information on their children’s performance. Parents are systematically informed when their child is making good progress or falling behind. Parents are now able to access electronically the results of tests taken by their child. Few have taken advantage of this resource to date but the school intends to provide training for as many as possible.

The school makes good use of outside agencies and support services to set targets for individual students. For example the educational psychologist, social service personnel and teachers frequently review and revise students’ individual education plans. The academic information support team has efficient systems in place to help those students who are in greatest need.

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.

Implementing a curriculum that best meets the needs of all students is a well-developed area of the school’s work. Leaders have shown considerable skill and ingenuity in providing a curriculum that generates meaningful data to support the school’s improvement plans. For example, programs in performing arts complement and reinforce work done in English language arts.

Teachers feel a collective responsibility for improving instruction and student outcomes. This is a real strength and serves to underline the commitment of teachers in the school. The principal and other school leaders have been very insightful and discerning in ensuring that budgetary decisions relate directly to the needs revealed by student data. For example, support has been put into classrooms where data indicates that individuals or groups of students are underachieving. The need for students to become more familiar with modern technologies has resulted in substantial investments in computer hardware and software. This includes a considerable number of electronic whiteboards and recently acquired equipment for robotics work.

The school is proficient in the way that it deals with its scheduling decisions. Staff are well-assigned in classrooms and relate well to the students. Regular and productive meetings are held to discuss students who are considered to be at risk or in need of additional help. These meetings frequently involve wider sections of the school community. For example, the student personnel committee, which meets every other week, involves an appropriate range of outside agencies. These professionals provide further insight into the care and well-being of students.

Students are, on the whole, actively engaged in the classroom. For example, they relish the opportunity to use an electronic whiteboard to understand the properties of shapes. They also enjoy many other opportunities to participate in such activities as ballroom dancing and school productions. Students know and trust an adult on the staff. Attendance and punctuality are high on the school’s list of priorities. Good attendance is celebrated and absences are followed up immediately.

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 well-developed features.

The school has recruited some good quality staff at all levels. Collectively, senior leaders have a very good understanding of the types of data that can be used to measure and improve students’ performance. Qualitative data are given a high priority in the school and emanate from surveys and conversations with students. All of this is well used, and most of it is shared with students.

All staff perceive professional development as an integral part of their role. A lot of development work is identified at faculty meetings and conferences. Teachers who are this year piloting data portfolios for students are still identifying and agreeing the type of data that should be included. Even at this early stage in the pilot, the portfolios are

yielding an invaluable reservoir of data and information on students' performance and progress.

The principal regularly observes classrooms and is discerning in his judgement of good instruction. His willingness to conduct a totally random walkthrough is testament to the absolute confidence that he has in all of his teachers. Further evidence of this is the frequency with which teachers observe and support each other. The skilled collaboration that takes place between teachers who share mixed classes of general and special education students is a good example of teamwork.

The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Procedures are clear and well documented. The principal is highly regarded by staff, parents and students. There is a widespread belief that he has the necessary skills and capacity to effect positive change.

The school has developed only a limited number of partnerships with outside agencies but parents believe that it is well regarded in the community. Prior to becoming an empowerment school, this was a magnet school of law, government and American citizenship. The school hopes in some way to be able to retain this distinctive feature.

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.

Regular meetings between groups of staff, and of the senior leadership team, enable goals and targets to be discussed. These meetings provide senior leaders with a view of how the school development plan is being implemented. The real value of an improvement plan, in monitoring and evaluating the progress of each goal and measuring its impact, has not yet been realized.

Many different meetings are held at which comparisons of students' progress within classrooms are made. However, there are few explorations of statistical contrasts across classrooms, like comparing mean scores in tests at the beginning and end of each year.

Teachers frequently revise plans as a result of information provided by periodic tests or following a conversation with a student. For example, in literacy where it is discovered that students have not understood how to analyze cause and effect, or in reading when students are reciting at a high level but with insufficient understanding of the text.

There is a good deal of planning in teams and a lot of sharing of information. Teachers are comfortable with self-evaluation and learning from each other. Some of the expertise that exists in the school with regard to data analysis has been disseminated but it is recognized that further help may have to be sought for both staff and parents.

The school is making reasonable progress in terms of using successive phases of goal-setting and improvement planning to realign practices and resources. The hope and expectation is that with the increased frequency of testing in English language arts and mathematics, and with the refinements being made to students' data portfolios, this aspect of the school's work will become firmly established in the near future.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Mary D Carter School (PS 151)	∅	✓	+
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	