



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

William T Davis School

Public School 031

**55 Layton Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10301**

Principal: Patricia Covington

Dates of review: December 14 – 15, 2006

Reviewer: Bruce Berry

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The William T. Davies School is an elementary school with 502 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The ethnic breakdown of the students is 53% Black, 32% Hispanic, 10% White, 3% Asian, 1% others. There are 5% English language learners and 12% special education students.

There were 99.4% Title 1 eligible students in 2004/5, higher than that for similar schools and City schools. The school receives Title 1 funding. The attendance figure is just over 90%, lower than for similar schools and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's strategic leadership and the teachers' hard work have transformed the school into being student-centered with achievement rising year after year.
- School leaders are focused on continuous school improvement.
- Data is effectively used for tracking student progress at all levels.
- The school is effective in meeting the needs of special education students and English language learners.
- The teachers work well in creating an educational environment which supports and engages the students.
- The school operates well on a day-to-day basis and has a caring culture for the students.
- Students enjoy school and have great respect for the principal and the teachers.
- The parents are very supportive of the quality of education and the care shown to their children.

What the school needs to improve

- Analyze the achievement of groups of students to check that sufficient progress is made by all, and use the information to set appropriate goals and targets.
- Develop the consistent use across the school of assessment practice and its use to raise the achievement levels of all students.
- Establish common practices for differentiated instruction and related activities in order to focus on individual needs of students.
- Develop the capacity of staff to embrace and integrate technology into their instructional practice.
- Consider further measures to raise attendance levels to at least that of similar and City schools.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school, with undeveloped features.

The school operates well on a day-to-day basis and has a very caring approach to its students, appreciated by students and parents alike. Data is used effectively by most teachers and by the cabinet to serve the needs of special education students, English language learners and other groups of students. The school curriculum is appropriate, although the use of technology in instructional practice is undeveloped. However, differentiated instruction is inconsistent at the classroom level.

Strategic leadership at the school has brought about a significant improvement in achievement, behavior and ethos in the past three years. However, a small number of teachers have yet to accept the principals' agenda for change, and this hampers the effective delivery of the school's vision and values

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.

There is overall consistency in the use of grade-level and whole-school assessment data. The majority of teachers assess student progress using appropriate diagnostics in literacy and the regular testing processes in the Everyday Mathematics series. Commercially purchased programs are used to enhance and track students' acquisition of phonics and to analyze their decoding skills. Individual teachers assess progress in reading through regular testing, and writing through the requirements as stated in the school's writing rubric. Conferencing is used to identify progress and intervention strategies, when needed. A small number of teachers follow their own informal intuitive knowledge of individual students' progress, but are less secure in the use of the school's assessment procedures and the link with instruction practices.

The need for pull-out and push-in support for identified individuals and groups is identified from the ongoing assessment strategies. School leaders collect and analyze assessment data, sample work and consider the effectiveness of intervention activities in order to track student achievement.

The school analyzes the data for individual students from the New York City tests and the Princeton assessments. It also looks at its data for these results year-on-year to track overall performance. Teachers are provided with the individual information on the performance of each student to identify areas of strength and areas for further development. Some teachers are more secure than others in their knowledge of how to use the information. The school does not, as yet, look in detail at the impact of analysis for other groups, particularly different ethnic groupings.

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 undeveloped features.

The school has appropriate planning and clear goal-setting for improving student performance. Goals are set by most teachers, and school leaders monitor progress on a regular basis. However, a small number of teachers have yet to accept the importance of a whole-school approach to using data as a means of impacting achievement, and this hampers the effective delivery of the school’s vision and values. At the classroom level, the majority of teachers use data to set goals and track progress, which lead to differentiated activities and appropriate intervention. A small number of teachers, however, lack consistency in the process of setting demanding and measurable goals for immediate and long-term improvements.

The school has good procedures in place for improving the performance and monitoring the progress of special education students, English language learners and other students with particular identified needs. Intervention strategies are planned on the basis of the progress made in small steps towards short-term goals. Academic intervention services are deployed to enhance achievement for individual students and groups of students by use of pull-out sessions to address identified skills development needs. Extended-day activities are also deployed to address identified areas of need and effectively support students, particularly those at levels 1 and 2, in raising their achievement levels.

English language learners are successfully integrated into general education classes. The support program is determined and progress is tracked against goals set following initial tests. The gifted and talented program provides challenge and accelerated learning opportunities to groups of students identified through analysis of assessment data. Students and parents are full of praise for the program and the extended opportunities given to the students.

School leaders and the majority of teachers have high expectations of the students. A small number of teachers’ expectations are based on their intuitive knowledge of the students’ progress as opposed to having the security of rigorous classroom assessment practices. Parents attend grade conferences and are able to make appointments to discuss their child’s progress at any time. Most parents agree that the education and care their children receive is of a good quality.

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 has a balanced curriculum, including the mandated curriculum for English language arts and mathematics, science and social studies. There is little use of technology across the curriculum to develop students’ skills and motivation.

The school makes efforts to hold teachers accountable for their students’ achievement. Teachers periodically complete a review sheet on student progress, shared with members of the cabinet. Monthly grade-level conferences consider curriculum impact and student

achievement. The instructional team collects and analyzes class and grade data, together with the class review sheets and samples of work from students. However, inconsistent use of data and of collaborative teamwork prevents a common approach to the use of information for setting goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

The majority of teachers plan and differentiate work as a result of analyzing the assessments of student progress. This may explain why, over the past three years, there has been a significant improvement in the results in the New York State exams. Teachers' conferencing with students gives them a deeper understanding of student needs, which in turn allows them to differentiate instruction for individuals or groups. Students are mainly engaged and challenged in lessons and are able to describe the activities and the learning outcomes. However, some teachers are insecure in the knowledge of how to differentiate appropriately to ensure every student makes progress in line with their individual needs.

Budgetary decisions are made in line with identified areas for development and resources are used effectively to ensure that opportunities exist for students of all levels of ability to achieve their potential. Staffing is used effectively across the school.

Great respect exists between teachers and students and there is a caring culture in the school towards the students, a view reinforced by the parents. Classroom teachers are knowledgeable about their students, academically and socially. Students say the teachers respect and listen to them and that the learning is interesting and challenging. Students are confident in being able to approach any adult to get help on any matter. The school holds a celebration of student achievement every month and parents are invited to attend.

In 2005 the attendance was 90%, below that of similar and City schools, as it was in the previous two years. The measures taken by the school to improve attendance have not yet been effective, since little improvement has been achieved over the past three 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 undeveloped features.

Procedures for the selection of teachers to the school are based on the identified needs of the school. Candidates are selected on the basis of their knowledge of instruction, learning and the way data and goals play a part in improving achievement.

Professional development needs are identified through the analysis of data in respect to the achievement of students across the curriculum and through discussion, at grade level meetings, of curriculum areas which need to be strengthened based upon data evidence. The principal frequently observes lessons, both formally and informally. Focused observations inform the professional development program. Where teachers are identified as needing support, coaches provide guidance and expertise to improve practice. They work well with staff to develop instructional practice in respect of aspects of the curriculum, identified through analysis of assessment data, as being in need of improvement. 'Lunch and learn' sessions provide opportunities for the coaches and teachers to discuss ways of improving instructional practice for identified curriculum strands. A few teachers do not engage with or take ownership of their own development needs.

The school operates very well on a day-to-day basis and has clear procedures, which are followed by all the school community. Despite this, the ability of the principal to effect

change is limited by poor relationships between some sections of the school community, both staff and parents. Dissent is having an adverse effect on the ability to develop collaborative practice in the school.

Support services are utilized effectively in support of student development, as seen in the pupil personnel team, which supports the school in creating clear action plans for students with identified needs. They liaise with parents and other agencies, where appropriate, to provide student support in order to raise student achievement.

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 principal's strategic leadership and management have significantly changed the culture, behavior and achievement in the school over her time in charge. Whole-school planning focuses on raising achievement by standardizing grade level instruction, assessment, and behavior management practices.

Assessment and comparisons of student progress provide evidence of measurable progress in meeting interim goals and intervention strategies are created to address areas where remedial actions are necessary or where areas for further improvement are identified. Interim goals are used to monitor progress and the impact on raising achievement between 2003 and 2005 has been significant. The curriculum strand performance data generated by the tests is used to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses and form the basis of future curriculum planning and realignment, at the individual student, class, grade and whole-school level in order to raise achievement in the areas identified.

School leaders have clear plans and goals for raising student performance further, having already had three years of significantly improvement across the school. However, the effective use of data in raising achievement is not recognized by a small group of staff and that has an impact on the school's ability to continue to drive up achievement and deliver plans and meet goals.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| SCHOOL NAME: William T Davis School (PS 031) | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 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 | |