



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Shell Bank School**

**Middle School 14**

**2424 Batchelder Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11235**

**Principal: Anne Tully**

**Dates of review: May 12 - 13, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Christina Lewis**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Shell Bank is a middle school with students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 62% Black, 17% Hispanic, 8% White, and 12% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 91%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 81% eligibility.

The school is a barrier free school and has a high level of students with physical disabilities.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school analyzes and uses a wide range of data to understand the performance and progress of each student.
- Academic intervention and other student support services effectively target underachievement.
- The school has a clear three-year strategic plan that is focused on school improvement.
- The appointment of a data specialist has increased staff skill and confidence in the use of data in their teaching.
- The principal has been inspirational in leading the school forward to achieve success.
- Teamwork and collaboration are strengths of the school.
- Students are confident, articulate and enjoy their time at school and as result are developing good learning skills.
- Inclusion is a positive feature and students with disabilities are fully integrated into the life of the school.
- Technology, music and the arts provide a stimulating learning experience that enriches the curriculum.
- The school offers a wide range of professional development opportunities.

### What the school needs to improve

- Use data to identify the high achieving students and develop programs to enrich and extend their learning.
- Make explicit to students and their parents the interim next steps needed to achieve interim and long-term goals.
- Implement a clear behavior policy that is consistently used and understood by the school community.
- Establish a clear vision with the whole school community that truly reflects the current work and purpose of the school.
- Rigorously evaluate the impact of the current action plan in order to gauge success, ensure consistency and determine next steps for improvement.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### **Progress made since the last review**

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

### **Overall Evaluation**

#### **This school is proficient.**

Shell Bank School has made good progress in addressing the areas for improvement outlined in the previous Quality Review. Both attendance and the quality of teaching have improved. This vibrant school offers many opportunities to its diverse population of learners. One parent said, "In one year it has done a complete turn around and is now the best place for our kids to be". The school is divided into three academies, each with its own distinctive focus that enhances the motivation and learning for all students.

The clear strategic plan prioritizes goals for improvement and unites the school community in a common purpose. However the vision and aims that reflect the unique nature of the school are yet to be formalized and shared with the wider community. The principal's purposeful leadership has built a strong team including a data specialist, who has increased staff skills in the understanding and use of data. The school analyzes and uses a wide range of data to understand students' performance. Low achieving students make good progress due to the wide range of intervention strategies. The school is very inclusive in meeting the needs of students with disabilities and as a result they are well integrated into school life.

The work of the inquiry team is successful in developing strategies improving the performance of the target group in English language arts. The school has yet to fully develop programs aimed at enriching the learning for high achieving students.

Eye-catching murals painted and designed by the students decorate the hallways and indicates that the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that includes technology, music and the arts. This breadth is also enhanced by the school's development as an environmental aquatic study center encompassing studies in law and oceanography. The strong partnerships the school has with external organizations has made this possible. As a result, students are well motivated and eager to learn, although they are not yet sure of the interim next steps needed to achieve their medium and long-term goals. The school is currently reviewing its behavior policy to ensure consistency of expectations throughout the school.

## **How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria**

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student's progress over time.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The school collects and analyses a wide range of data to understand the performance and progress of each student. This has been improved since the previous Quality Review by the appointment of a teacher with responsibility for collecting and analyzing the data and making it more accessible and understandable to teachers. Data is now available electronically and various programs including teachers' formative assessments are used consistently and this helps in accurately setting goals and in tracking students' progress as they move through the school. As a result, teachers are confident in their interpretations and use of data. Staff regularly updates and refines goals set at student, classroom, and grade level throughout the year.

The large population of special education student includes those with high levels of physical impairment. The school prioritizes their progress and performance and, as a result of streamlined support and a clear focus on their needs, they make good progress in relation to prior achievement. Inclusion is a strong feature and every effort to integrate these students fully into school life is made.

The progress of English language learners is tracked with care. Suitable support programs such as Saturday school, focusing on the acquisition of language skills, successfully addresses their needs. The school has also identified a gender difference in reading skills. In response they encourage boys' interest in reading by providing more engaging reading material. The school has yet to fully focus on identifying the high achievers in all grades and to plan programs that enrich and extend their learning although targeted groups of grade 7 and 8, study in extra classes for the Regents examinations in math and science.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The principal and her team set challenging goals for school improvement. They share with the school community a three-year action plan that detail time frames and actions required to meet these goals. As a result, everyone clearly understands what has to be achieved to secure school improvement. Teamwork is a strong feature of the school and supports very good collaboration between the school leaders and staff. Regular discussion of student progress through well-developed use of data enables setting suitable goals across grades, classes and for individuals. The school uses a wide range of effective support and intervention strategies to help students work toward achieving their goals. These are carefully planned around individual need and are constantly updated and refined at weekly grade meetings and case conferences. The inquiry team has focused on the progress of a target group of special education English language learners and has been very successful in the strategies used to target these students. It is developing ways to extend the support to a wider range of students. One member of

the team said, “If this works with the target group, imagine what it will do for the rest of the students”.

Parents are supportive of the school and are pleased with the change of tone within the school. “My child is really motivated and wants to do well,” reflects the view of many parents. They value the school’s high expectations and the many opportunities they have to find out about the work of the school, including through Saturday workshops. However, although parents know their children’s long-term goals, the school has yet to be more explicit in sharing the small steps necessary to achieve them.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The school core curriculum focuses on the needs of its student population. Constant revision and adaptation ensures that programs meet these needs. Technology, music and the arts provide stimulating learning experiences that enhance all curriculum areas within the school day and in after school programs. As a result students enjoy their learning and are confident and articulate about their work. In addition, the establishment of the academies, with their own curricular focus, provides greater opportunities for exploring the environment through aquatic studies. Using a federal grant, the school is setting up research laboratories to extend this work and develop further the opportunities for hands-on science discovery and exploration, as well as building on research, writing and inquiry skills.

Lessons in English language arts and math are well planned with clear learning objectives and differentiated activities that meet most students’ learning needs. The school has yet to fully establish this good practice in other curricular areas. The school has yet to extend and enrich the learning of higher achieving students sufficiently. The stimulating curriculum approaches ensure that most students are fully engaged in their learning and are making good progress toward their goals. Staff ensure that the values of trust and respect underpin all of the schools work, and as a result create a positive inclusive learning environment where students feel safe and supported. “School is good and getting better,” was the opinion of a group of students. Effective measures to tackle low attendance and lateness show steadily improving results.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is well developed.**

The school rigorously observes and monitors teaching. This is done informally through daily learning walks by the assistant principals and coaches and more formally by lesson observations with a specific focus. Teachers receive written feedback and are supported effectively by the administration in improving their teaching. This includes modelling teaching or collaborative time spent planning. Professional development is carefully based on individual need as well as school and grade requirements. Teachers share their experiences from external conferences so that all are involved in any new

initiatives. Outside consultants are also used to work alongside teachers and to support curriculum development, leading to improved skills and confidence in planning and instruction. The school does not have a high turn over of staff, but one new teacher said. "It is a great experience with plenty of support".

The school effectively uses a wide range of academic interventions and support services to target under achieving students and to help those with special education needs. Regular case conferences and discussions ensure that all students get the best available support for their academic progress as well as for their social and emotional well-being. Guidance councillors and social workers liaise effectively with students' families and staff to provide comprehensive support.

Clear procedures ensure the smooth running of the school. A team of staff are currently reviewing and revising the behaviour policy to ensure consistency and understanding of positive behaviour codes throughout the school community. Strong partnerships with outside organisations positively impact on teaching and learning. These include links with several universities, 'Oceans of Know' and the 'Mare program', all which contribute to the school's exciting aquatic theme.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school has developed effective systems to monitor progress of students towards meeting their goals. A variety of formative and summative assessments, including national tests, school interim tests, students' own assessment portfolios, are collected and analyzed at regular intervals throughout the year. Progress is also discussed at case conferences and reported to the leadership team. As a result, short-term or long-term interventions and enrichment programs are planned and implemented in order that students are supported in achieving their goals. This is provided through extra classes before or after school, or extra support during the school day. Students identified at continued risk of under-achieving are referred to the student personnel team, who suggest different strategies and more focused intervention. Diagnostic tests are used very successfully in tracking the success of the intervention programs and the progress of students identified at risk.

The school has developed a strategic three-year plan for school improvement that is monitored and revised regularly by the school cabinet to ensure that the timeframes and goals are being met. However they have yet to fully evaluate the impact and success of the 2007/08 actions in order to determine next steps for school improvement.

The principal has a very clear vision for the future development of the school and recognizes that the whole school community must work together to establish aims that really reflect the work and purpose of the school as it enters the next exciting phase of its development. "It is important that we share with the wider community where we want to go," she said.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Shell Bank School</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>			X		

### Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?			X		
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				X	

### Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?			X		
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?			X		
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			X		

### Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?			X		
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?			X		
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?			X		
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X		

<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?			X		
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?			X		
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					X

<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?			X		
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					X

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>