



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

George Washington Carver

Elementary School 040

**265 Ralph Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Leonnie Hibbert

Dates of review: March 14 and 17, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Sue Hall

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

George Washington Carver is an elementary school with 350 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 87% Black, 10% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 91.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 81% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Shared decision-making is well established and results in a cohesive community centered on learning.
- The principal has a clear vision for school improvement that is shared by all the staff.
- The school is a reflective community focused on continuous improvement.
- Staff collect and analyze a wide range of data to track the progress students make.
- Staff, students and parents have good expectations of each other.
- The school gives high priority to teachers' professional development to improve the quality of instruction.
- Relationships are strong resulting in most students' good behavior and an enjoyment of learning.
- School leaders are very clear about what good learning looks like and tackle identified weaknesses with rigor.
- The budget is used well to ensure that the accommodation is looked after well and staffing and resources contribute positively to student learning.
- The principal is well supported by the assistant principal and other key staff.

What the school needs to improve

- Make more effective use of assessment information to ensure work is consistently differentiated to meet the needs of all students and particularly the younger ones.
- Ensure that when students withdraw from classroom activities because of occasional behavior issues that their time is used productively to support learning.
- Ensure that teachers provide a broad and engaging curriculum with more opportunities to enhance skills in the arts.

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 well developed.

The whole staff of the George Washington Carver School work very effectively as an enthusiastic and collaborative team for the good of the students. The principal has a clear vision for the school and is a driving force in leading the school forward. Parents, students and staff respect the principal highly and note that they believe, “she is very engaging and open to change”. The assistant principal and cabinet together have a good grasp of their roles and support the principal well. School leaders have established good working practices that involve all staff in decision making so that all feel fully informed and involved. This then leads to staff working well together in identifying and pursuing goals so that the school “runs like a well oiled clock”.

The school addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous Quality Review well. Staff have extended the range of data available to track progress and most teachers use this effectively to inform planning between and across grades. Through good quality professional development opportunities, staff are now equipped to recognize and learn from one another’s good practice including opportunities to observe other classes. Effective monitoring and evaluating of progress towards goals and plans is embedded and the school leaders correctly identify what makes teaching and learning effective or where improvement is needed. While the levels achieved in State tests are still often below grade expectations, they are improving and staff rightly believe “we are getting better and if there is a problem things are handled properly and quickly”.

Teachers collect a wide range of assessment information and produce very clear data spreadsheets that track the progress of each individual student and class. This information is wide-ranging, clear and accessible and the spreadsheets are an effective tool in driving a strong school-wide focus on data. The spotlight of the inquiry team on the needs of individual students is also helpful in identifying specific influences that affect the progress of those who find learning difficult. The lessons learned from the initial focus on math have been a starting point for other studies. The school uses the range of data and the findings of monitoring well to set long term and interim goals for improvement. The curriculum has a clear focus on English language arts and math but parents, students and this current Quality Review recognize that there are sometimes limited activities to enhance skills in the arts.

Teachers generally use data well to plan differentiated activities to meet the needs of the range of learners. However, this is not entirely consistent and at times teachers set students the same task with, for instance, little structure to teaching younger students at the early stages of writing. This does not fully meet their needs or support learning as well as it might. Staff make clear their expectations of good work and behavior to the students. Where occasional incidents of inappropriate behavior occur students are taught to move away from the source of the problem. However, their learning is then affected as at times nothing further is provided for them to maintain progress within the lesson.

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 principal and school cabinet have worked hard since the previous Quality Review to extend the already effective systems in which staff regularly check and track the progress students make. The school has a very pro-active approach to data as seen in displays entitled "data helps us grow". The school now has a good range of assessment information and is continually identifying how to use this even further to inform planning. The collation of this information in data spreadsheets is a very effective and easily accessible way in which to track progress. The information comes from a wide range of sources including assessments in early childhood literacy, developmental reading, *Everyday Math* units, ACUITY, *Renzulli Learning* for enrichment programs as well as students' work. Staff also collect and analyze conferring notes and assessment binders and produce projection spreadsheets for grades 3 through 5 in math. This evidence ensures an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, class and grade level.

The staff carefully study the data to identify any differences in the achievement of boys and girls and other groups, and for instance, have used this information well to purchase additional reading materials for boys. Data is used well to measure the progress of special education students and the small number of English language learners and to identify where they need additional support. While the current system for tracking progress was only introduced this year, there is a wide range of other data to track the progress of individuals and cohorts from year to year and to compare this with other schools. The principal and other key leaders including the coaches have a good overall picture of the performance of the school and place a growing emphasis on evaluating and comparing students' progress in all areas.

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 well developed.

Shared decision-making and collaboration are at the heart of the way the school operates and is a key feature of recent successes. Teachers, students and parents are all carefully consulted as part of the on-going process of planning and setting goals. The principal has a very good grasp of the data available and how to use this to understand each student's next learning steps. Senior staff work with coaches and others to set suitably high goals that are measurable and have clear time frames for successfully accelerating learning across the school. This collaborative approach is adopted by all staff and is illustrated in that they do not wait for formal meetings to discuss and adjust planning but are often reactive in effectively addressing issues as they occur.

The main goals are discussed by the school cabinet and widely displayed around the school. Therefore, every parent and visitor is aware of the current target for 55% of students to be on grade level in English language arts and math. Individual and cohort goals are also set. Some of this information is graphically displayed for staff with specific action and timeframes identified. The inquiry team's initial focus on the progress of low

attaining students in math, including those in greatest need of improvement, has been widened to include English language arts.

Parents and caregivers are provided with a good range of information about progress and most are clear about what needs to be further improved. Parents are invited to provide the school with a range of information about their child's needs, which is particularly helpful when deciding the support to be provided for those with emotional and behavioral difficulties. The principal, senior staff and teachers convey consistently high expectations of students and their families, which most are keen to live up to.

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 well developed.

The school is effective in aligning work and resources to engage students, and in providing meaningful data about progress in order to raise achievement. The core curriculum is based on mandated State guidance. The school makes good budgeting decisions with a priority being the maintenance of small classes so that students get a lot of adult support. Teacher surveys are effective in identifying what activities and resources are required to align work to strategic decisions. Activities in math and English language arts make use of a good range of resources and staff are working purposefully to extend the level of instruction even further. New materials have recently been purchased to enhance literacy activities. Resources including new laptops, which are appreciated by the students, now extend their learning. However, students and parents identify there are limited opportunities to develop skills in a wide range of arts related activities including art, music and drama. Common preparation time is part of regular practice and ensures staff work together to identify strengths and areas for development in the work planned and to tailor this to the students' needs. An after school program of "Sport and the Arts" supports learning and is popular with students and parents alike. This includes a series of visits to places of educational interest funded by the school.

The principal and assistant principal clearly hold staff to account for the progress and learning in their classes. This ensures that most teachers plan and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of the students. However, there is some inconsistency in this and at times all students are provided with the same task that does not meet the range of abilities and skills well enough. This is most notable for younger students because teachers miss opportunities to model how to improve writing.

There is a high degree of professional trust and respect between members of staff and the students, and many readily admit they talk to staff about a range of issues. The statement "Be kind, work hard." is widely displayed is a clear aim for staff and students. The school does much to encourage good attendance, although initiatives do not always meet with the parental support that such efforts deserve.

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.

This is a very collaborative school. There are well-established systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. This includes formal and

many informal lesson observations. The principal is a visible presence around school and has a high level of awareness of what happens in the classroom. Praise is used well to support teachers together with counseling on how to improve skills. Professional development is viewed as a high priority. The teacher's needs assessment survey is a useful tool for identifying and meeting priorities. Staff have many opportunities to work together and enthusiastically collaborate with other colleagues and schools. The "lunch and learn" sessions run by a coach are highly valued opportunities to focus on identified areas and particularly math. Several of the staff are relatively recent appointments to the school and identify how the close collaborative working has been a key feature in enabling them to enjoy their experiences and become valued members of the staff team.

Guidance staff and other support services work well with identified students. For instance, there are additional staff who support speech development and students with behavioral concerns. The school has been particularly successful recently in integrating students having difficulties in other schools. Almost without fail, because of good guidance and support, these students make improvements in their behavior and tracking indicates many then subsequently make gains in their learning. The School Wide Intervention System and the Positive Behavior Intervention Support systems are effective in extending staff skills and ensuring most students behave well. Students are taught that when occasional conflicts occur to withdraw themselves from activities. However, while this helps calm such situations little work is then provided for them to continue learning in the following lesson.

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 well developed.

The principal, assistant-principal, teachers other staff, and parents have a clear vision for the future development of the school. School self-evaluation is good and recognizes many of the strengths and weaknesses of current provision. For instance, the inquiry team has moved its original focus from math to provision for the lowest attaining students in English language arts. The Comprehensive Education Plan is used well to focus on improvement.

The school has well-established structures for evaluating progress and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to accelerate learning. Interim goals for students and staff are set at regular intervals. They are clear and specific, measurable and have clear timeframes identified. Staff work hard to consider what motivates students to learn and have recently introduced the innovative feature of students earning "carver cash" as rewards, which they can spend on school related materials.

Cabinet meetings are an effective forum for members to plan, reflect and revise strategies to improve goals and objectives. Literacy and math portfolios for each student are used well to continually adapt planning to meet needs. Teachers, coaches and consultants all use data to assist this process for individuals and groups of students. The staff are very reactive to situations and revise plans immediately to meet most goals. Strategic decisions are made well to modify individual or group practice. This drives the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning well. Overall, this is a school that reacts well to the needs of all students and continues to improve the quality of education provided.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: George Washington Carver School	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

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.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					X

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.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					X

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped