



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Sheepshead Bay Elementary School

Elementary School 52

**2675 East 29th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11235**

Principal: Ilene Altschul

Dates of review: December 3 - 5, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Corinne Brown

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Sheepshead Bay Elementary School is an elementary school with 739 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 24.4% Black, 13.7% Hispanic, 54.3% White, 0.3% American Indian and 7.4% Asian students. The student body includes 14.1% English language learners and 14.5% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 91.7%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 65.4% eligibility.

This school has a gifted class in each grade. There are seven collaborative team teaching classes: one in each grade and two in grade 3. There is a self-contained English language learner program in both kindergarten and grade 1. The needs of some special education students are served in the 12:1:1 (students, teacher and paraprofessional respectively) classes in kindergarten, third and fifth grade.

The school building has several specialist rooms including a library, computer lab, two science rooms, an art room, gymnasium and auditorium.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The strong principal and assistant principals work cohesively, with detailed knowledge of staff, students and families, to improve student outcomes.
- The school uses a wide range of data effectively to understand student performance and establish realistic goals and associated plans.
- High expectations for learning and behavior drive the school forward.
- The broad curriculum, including the arts, is reflected in the print-rich environment and quality of student work.
- Professional development and mentoring is comprehensive, based on staff and student need, and supports the skilled teachers effectively.
- Students are engaged in interesting, differentiated learning that the dedicated teachers plan based on careful assessment.
- Flexible planning, staffing and considered budgeting signal the school's commitment to providing quality education for all students.
- An atmosphere of respect is evident throughout the school, where students feel valued and supported well by teachers, guidance and other services.
- Strong links with parents, timely monitoring and support programs mean that students who experience difficulties make good progress.
- The school community shares the clear vision to provide student-centered opportunities for social, emotional and academic growth.

What the school needs to improve

- In grade planning, ensure that steps are identified that will show progress towards explicit goals within agreed timescales.
- Ensure instruction is consistently planned to address the needs and learning styles of all students, including English language learners.

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 principal is dynamic and her significant strengths are complemented by those of the assistant principals. This supportive team sets the tone for the school and fosters a sense of community throughout by modeling respect and care for the individual students and families. The administration is seen by staff as consummate professionals who manage the school successfully with high expectations for academic, social and emotional growth. They effect change sensitively, empower teachers and lead the school in the use of data to inform all school practice.

The school is fortunate to have skilled teachers and a large supportive core of families that are actively involved in the life of the school. There is an ongoing challenge to reach out to those families who have recently arrived in the neighborhood and for whom English is not their first language. Many staff are bilingual and the parent coordinator is pivotal in bridging any frustrations. The school works hard to address the particular needs of its various student populations, especially to promote continuity of attendance by students whose families are transient or visit home countries for extended periods.

The school works to ensure consistency and continually improve the already high quality education it provides for students. Systems have been streamlined in the light of last year's Quality Review so that staff are more involved in decision-making, with resultant school goals that are clearly defined and measurable. Grade planning is more collaborative but explicit goals with associated plans are not always incorporated. Assessment procedures are more refined and include teachers' evaluations of progress. These extend to areas other than math and English language arts, and the work is ongoing. As the student demographic is changing, with a continual influx of English language learners, the school recognizes the scope for further refinement in instructional planning to ensure that the needs of all students are clearly addressed through multiple strategies.

The work of the inquiry team complements and extends the work of many teams that exist in the school. The detailed records the school collects and the skill applied in analyzing the data means that the target group of students is identified, further data is collected and the particular focus is established. Next steps are defined and responsibilities delineated, ensuring that the process is thorough and effective.

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 maintains a strategic overview of all school data which is gathered into one binder to look for patterns and trends. This is formally reviewed five times a year to identify any anomalies by class, subject or student group and timely action is taken as indicated. The principal and assistant principals share responsibilities across the school to maintain continual oversight of data management and utilization within classrooms to ensure consistency. The principal meets with each teacher at least twice a year to review progress and address concerns, taking into account her excellent knowledge of the individual and factors that may impact on performance. Feedback is professional and supportive.

The administration, pupil personnel team and academic intervention services team carefully disaggregate data to examine individual student progress, especially by the special education student population, which has increased by over 3% this year, and the English language learners, which have increased by 3%. The school uses data effectively to enable early identification of need, establish support programs and monitor progress with adjustment or modification as required. As a result these students make good progress. These teams also track student and school progress year on year and identify anomalies. Group performance by ethnicity and gender, and also by subject area, is determined to inform planning, particularly at the whole school level. The professional development team utilizes such data to determine training needs.

School-wide data binders structure collection and include classroom observations, running records and conference records. State and City assessments help determine students' strengths and areas for further reinforcement. Student reading levels are benchmarked across the school to determine student progress. End of unit tests and classroom observations in math provide data for individual students. Work is assessed using student-friendly rubrics and collected by subject area in color-coded portfolios. In this way the school ensures consistency of information gathering. All teachers are becoming more skilled at detailed analysis and looking for patterns. They welcome technology and information from sources such as Acuity to assist in this. Training is ongoing, and consists of both whole school and personalized professional development. The school has strong links with its collaborative community of practice partner school and also the five other neighborhood elementary schools with which they frequently share information and best practice.

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.

There is a significant focus on community development within the school. To this end the collegial staff have additional grade common planning time to examine data, plan comprehensively and share expertise. Collaborative team teachers are particularly skilled at devising differentiated lessons based on assessment, with built-in small steps that

enable students to succeed. Although staff plan and use data well, grade planning does not always incorporate explicit goals with agreed timescales that enable systematic evaluation. Due regard is given to the individual education plan goals for students. The individual education plan teacher, coaches and staff developers assist teams in effective planning through the use of data to differentiate and this work is continually refined.

The school meticulously identifies students in greatest need of improvement, and any who are experiencing difficulties, through regular, rigorous collection and review of data. Effective support is provided through both push-in and pull-out models, with programs such as *Wilson Foundations*. Many students work independently in class on programs such as *Leapfrog* which motivate them. The school is piloting the *Awards* computer reading program particularly for English language learner students in kindergarten and first grade. This is being formally evaluated externally but the school has noted considerable success in moving students forward. Effective links with parents underpin all student support programs. Good progress by higher achieving students is accomplished in the “Eagle” and other classes.

The high expectations for learning and behavior set by the principal and endorsed within all classrooms drive the school forward. There are strong systems in place to share values, exchange information and involve parents in their child’s education, especially through the use of translation services and other outreach. Multiple methods, including email, ensure that parents understand the school’s high expectations and belief in equality of opportunity. Parents are very appreciative of all aspects of the work of the school.

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 aligns its curriculum with State standards. The systematic use of the Teachers’ College literacy program and Everyday Math ensures the school has ongoing detailed assessment data to inform planning for progress. Other areas within its broad curriculum provide continual and relevant evaluation of student work to build a holistic picture of student social, emotional and academic development. The school uses its budget wisely to provide the resources teachers identify that will support differentiated learning. The environment is print-rich and carefully structured to facilitate independent learning. The quality of student and staff work is valued through vibrant evolving display that also reflects the integration of the arts. Students are exposed to music education, including instrumental instruction, as well as fine art. Varied free after-school enrichment activities exemplify the careful use of budget, staff and scheduling. In this way all students are able to benefit from interesting opportunities that enhance their academic achievement.

Daily class visits and focused walkthroughs ensure that teachers are accountable. Teachers are dedicated and work hard to develop an inclusive respectful community within the classroom. They plan interesting, differentiated lessons thoroughly rooted in data that engage students. As a student commented, “Teachers are very involved. They help us a lot and throw in a lot of fun.” The placement of all students is carefully considered at the start of the year to achieve heterogeneous groups within the general education population. Regular review of groupings and classes through assessment and monitoring ensures that students are best placed to progress. Academic intervention service programs are sensitively tailored to the individual student and continually reviewed.

As the student population profile is continually changing, the school plans instruction that addresses the general needs of all learners, especially those students from families where English is not the main language. Further refinement in planning to focus on different learning styles is not yet consistent in all classrooms. There is significant investment in additional guidance, academic support and English language learner staff. The school has comprehensive systems to maximize attendance and works strenuously with targeted families.

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.

In this reflective school, staff development is high priority. The administration and professional development team have sound knowledge of staff strengths and areas for development. Accordingly, staff development is suitably differentiated for staff, student and school need. Staff developers, coaches, lead teachers and the administration participate in and deliver formal and "hands-on" training. Collaborative meetings and the open atmosphere in the school mean that staff work together and are mutually supportive. The many paraprofessionals support the school aim of improving student outcomes through relevant training and work in tandem with class teachers. The school is fortunate to have many experienced and skilled teachers who freely share expertise and have welcomed the teachers who are new this year. The effective mentoring plan means that these new teachers feel very well supported.

The school provides a good range of support services so that students feel able to talk about concerns. Guidance and other support services are acknowledged by students as significantly helpful and are a strength of the school. The service providers broaden their support for students and work with families to build skills and further a consistent approach. Consistency and clear expectations mean the school runs very smoothly. The school has many existing partnerships that enhance student learning such the dance residencies, the Screen Actors Guild and the legal program with the District Attorney's office. It is looking to extend such opportunities and develop whole school initiatives with suitable partners.

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, who is focused on solutions, works with the high caliber assistant principals and teachers in shared vision. The commitment to improve student outcomes is based on a thorough knowledge of students and detailed utilization of data. The school community shares in the formation and monitoring of realistic measurable goals. Surveys of parents and teachers provide additional information that informs planning. All teachers set goals with the principal at the start of the year based on student data and the teacher's professional goals. Systematic review of multiple data sources means that the administration rigorously evaluates progress against school, class, subject and student goals. Resources and staffing are flexibly realigned to effect change at the required pace as indicated by this ongoing and regular analysis of data.

The school has made good progress in ensuring consistency and uniformity in data gathering and analysis since the last Quality Review. Strong leadership means that structures are firmly in place to ensure high quality instruction with effective deployment of resources so that students make good progress. The school community has the skills, willingness and strength to continue its drive to maintain a child-centered learning environment, where staff care about the development of the whole child, as it responds to changing needs in the student population.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Sheepshead Bay Elementary School	△	▷	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▷	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, 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?				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?				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 make 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	