



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Edward B. Shallow School

Intermediate School 227

6500 16th Avenue

Brooklyn

NY 11204

Principal: Brenda Champion

Dates of review: May 12 - 14, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Alvin Jeffs

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

Overall evaluation

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Edward B. Shallow is a middle school with 1,403 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 2% Black, 29% Hispanic, 21% White, and 48% Asian students. The student body includes 29% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 93.1%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 85% eligibility.

The school divided into three academies in 1997, each headed up by an assistant principal. These are The Renaissance Project, The School of Environmental Studies and The School of American Experience. A fourth assistant principal oversees student, parent and community affairs, while a fifth works across the three academies to coordinate matters relating to special education students and English language learners.

The school is the only barrier-free middle school in the area and provides support for students with physical disabilities.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The clear and effective vision of the principal, and good commitment by staff, has contributed to significant progress over the past three years.
- There is especially strong monitoring of special education students and English language learners, who make good progress.
- Good induction procedures ensure teachers new to the school receive effective support in improving their practice and in analyzing data.
- The school involves students effectively in the planning of new learning targets.
- The core-curriculum supports students well in improving their performance.
- Careful budgeting decisions and skilled appointments have strengthened many aspects of school life.
- There is high attendance because of rigorous procedures to promote and monitor it.
- Robust procedures make the school a safe and orderly place.
- A strong partnership with the Neighborhood Improvement Association underpins an excellent after-school program.
- The administration plans new initiatives well, with clear deadlines and regular reviews.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that teachers use data consistently to differentiate instruction in all classrooms to a high level.
- Tailor professional development sessions to meet the changing needs of all staff, especially more experienced teachers, and ensure that they are fully accessible.
- Set clear performance targets for cohorts of students.
- Review the current role and membership of the school leadership team.

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.

“Shallow” has made significant progress over the past year. The principal’s vision for improvement emphasizes raising standards and achievement. There are clear goals for special education students and English language learners, and the school has made good progress towards attaining them. Support programs, such as “Read 180” and “Jamestown Navigator”, form part of a comprehensive assessment program, which provides data for administrators, coaches and teachers alike. The school gives individual students goals for improvement, and is now looking at setting specific performance targets for cohorts of students.

Classroom observations and walkthroughs provide administrators with a clear view of teaching quality and the implementation of school-wide goals. Good budgeting and scheduling supports these goals well, together with key appointments, such as an assessment coordinator and an additional academic intervention services teacher. The core curriculum meets the learning needs of students well, as teachers take great care when designing new programs of study to make them relevant. Some good training takes place, especially in how to analyze data, but this is not always scheduled at times that are convenient for all staff. More seasoned teachers feel that training does not fully take into account their levels of experience.

The school has addressed the areas of improvement identified within the last Quality Review well. This means that students have more of a voice through the student council. Everybody understands the school’s priorities for improvement. In addition, instruction engages students better, so that teachers set clear learning objectives and have a better knowledge of performance levels. Staff have consistently high expectations of themselves and of students. They involve students well in setting new targets. However, there is still variation in the extent to which teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students. The school does not yet identify clear performance goals for cohorts of pupils based on their prior attainment.

Attendance is rising because of highly effective measures to monitor absence. The school runs smoothly because of its calm orderly environment, where students feel valued and safe. The inquiry team focuses well on students who have the potential to reach Level 3. The team is developing good materials and strategies for these students that it hopes to introduce throughout the school.

The administration draws up effective plans with measurable interim goals, and reviews them regularly. The impact of the school leadership team is not as effective as it could be, because of vacancies and a lack of rigor in evaluating initiatives. The role and composition of this group is currently under review.

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 proficient.

The school has a comprehensive bank of data available to all staff in a form that is useful for strategic and classroom planning. The leadership of the school collects and analyzes this data on a regular basis and so always has a detailed picture of the progress of individual students, grades and departments. Most staff and students routinely use periodic assessments to check on progress. Detailed and meticulous collection and analysis of data relating to special education students and English language learners has had a very positive impact. There is now an excellent understanding of the effectiveness of intervention programs, and student individual education plans are always up to date and accurate. Staff respond to data in a timely way that contributes to good student progress. The school has a perceptive view of the performance and progress of subgroups, such as Hispanic students, those who are at risk of dropping a grade and those "pushable" students who are close to the next grade. The inquiry team, in particular, has made very good use of data to identify the grade 7 students that would benefit from more intensive input.

There are useful links with similar middle schools, particularly by the principal and assistant principal with responsibility for special education students and English language learners. The school is eager to learn from other schools, and so is making more visitations to share concerns and practices. Well-designed training programs and the purchase of suitable technology support the development of data collection and analysis, which teachers new to the school find particularly helpful.

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.

Staff work together well to share data during discussions about individual students. All teachers keep detailed student portfolios and assessment folders. These provide the data for discussions between teachers, students and parents. There are frequent opportunities to discuss students whose progress, attendance or behavior is giving cause for concern at regular academy, grade, special education and English language learner meetings. The thoroughness of classroom assessment means that teachers are able to draw on a variety of sources of evidence to highlight any concerns they may have about individual students. These include samples of work, quiz and assessment data and observations. The inquiry team makes effective use of a range of data to aid discussions and accelerate solutions for those pupils who are in greatest need of improvement.

A number of the whole-school goals relate closely to increasing student performance, in particular the increased use of data and greater differentiation within lesson planning. All teachers show an awareness of the annual priorities and their role in achieving them. Staff have high expectations of their students and this is conveyed to them during classroom conferences and with parents at regular points throughout the year. The school involves them well in setting new learning targets. Parents appreciate the wealth of detail that many teachers use at conferences with them. They also recognize that teachers "do listen".

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.

All staff use end-of-unit assessments and tests well to assess student progress regularly throughout the year. They design well-structured curriculum units to support students’ learning. When designing a new program, such as in social studies, teachers go to great lengths to ensure that progress within the new units is measurable. Special education and English language learner staff add their assessments to those of subject teachers, identifying patterns of progress, and use these as the basis for revising individual education plans. Throughout the school as a whole, however, there are inconsistencies in the way teachers make use of the information about students to plan the next steps in their learning. This results in teaching that is sometimes not differentiated sufficiently to meet the needs of all students.

Students have opportunities to create imaginative artwork, such as the Red Ribbon Week calendar. They also take part in many musical and dramatic performances. Parents appreciate these, saying that the curriculum is rich over and above the academic subjects. However, they feel that there could be more and greater consistency of arts subjects across the three academies.

The principal and cabinet are skilful in identifying funds and staffing for key areas. Additional funding for laptops has improved the technology curriculum, while class teacher and assistant principal appointments have strengthened the capacity within special education and English language learner support. There are good and rigorous processes for following up attendance and lateness issues. At 94%, the level of student attendance is high for the area. The administration aims to hold teachers accountable for the performance and progress of their students, but leaders are not proactive enough in eliminating weak teaching. A period of rapid change has seen some tensions within the staff body. As things begin to settle down with a period of consolidation, there is now a growing trust between faculty staff and the administration.

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 proficient.

Coaches work hard to develop a rich program of training. They also make a valuable contribution to mentoring new staff. Together with other experienced teachers, they have regular one-to-one meetings with them to discuss their practice. “Lunch and learn” sessions have been introduced, which most, but not all, staff find convenient to attend. While coaches and leaders attempt to adapt professional development to the differing needs of all staff, more seasoned staff would like training that takes their high levels of experience more into account.

Observations contribute well to encouraging high standards. Where teachers require additional support, good processes link them to suitable materials and specific professional development. Daily inter-visitations between staff assist in the exchange of expertise that happens at both a formal and informal level. “Model classrooms” within the school receive regular inter-visitations by teachers in the school. The collaborative team teaching teachers have been provided with internal and external professional development to build team

teaching strategies. The school seeks the best for its students, and has developed clear internal procedures to ensure it runs smoothly. There is good staff supervision of hallways at changes of lessons. Students appreciate the resulting safe and supportive environment.

Imaginative partnerships enhance the curriculum and enrich the health and personal care of students. Partnerships with the Frick Museum and a jazz residency enrich the arts program, while work with the Hudson River Project and Project Green Reach assist in raising environmental issues. Links with external welfare agencies add a range of student and family support services. The exciting partnership with the Neighborhood Improvement Association has meant that an increasing number of students have access to a wide range of physical, artistic and craft activities after school.

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.

Low achievement in the past means the school is working to a restructuring plan, agreed with the district. It contains clear, measurable goals for the school to meet. The school values this way of working and so now has its own rigorous procedures for strategic planning with deadlines and review points throughout the year. The annual plan arises from detailed discussions within cabinet and staff members on subcommittees of the restructuring plan. As cabinet members represent the academies, there is good interaction between the whole-school and the 'mini-schools' that the academies represent. An interim review this year has meant that the new behavior system has not been implemented because of cost. Similarly, data collected last year indicated that the Wilson reading program was not as effective as expected and that has led to the introduction of "Read 180" and "Jamestown" to support reading.

The school is very open to changing course if data indicates something needs adjusting or abandoning. At present, the school leadership team is small and not sufficiently involved in contributing to or evaluating strategic planning. The school wishes to review both the membership and role of this team to ensure it has a central role in whole-school planning.

At classroom level, within the academies, there is regular discussion of expectations and the progress of students. Teachers are increasingly using data to inform these discussions. At present, teachers do not quantify levels of annual progress expected within individual classes. All plans now have clear goals, deadlines and review points.

'Shallow' now has a clear vision. Seeking the best for all of its students, it sees the value of data and seeks to ensure that all planning moves the school toward improving student outcomes. Initiatives and appointments have strengthened the staff, and so the school has moved forward considerably since the last Quality Review.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Edward B. Shallow 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