



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

David A Boody School

Middle School 228

**228 Avenue S
Brooklyn
NY 11223**

Principal: Dominick D'Angelo

Dates of review: April 28 - 29, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Richard D D'Auria

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

David A Boody School is a middle school with 972 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 21.7% Black, 16.3% Hispanic, 37.5% White and 24.5% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92.3%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 63% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal exhibits strong leadership skills and uses them to articulate and establish a shared vision and collaborative culture.
- Training and management in the understanding of data have improved rapidly and are enhanced by the introduction of assessment technology.
- Curricular, budgetary and staffing decisions are strategically and effectively made by utilizing data to determine current needs and trends.
- Improved routines, policies, procedures and protocols have been implemented to support a smoothly functioning school community.
- Students value the high expectations and efforts of their teachers in support of their success.
- Parents appreciate the respectful, family-like atmosphere of the school and the overall responsiveness of administration and staff to their concerns.
- The utilization of instructional technology is embedded, systemic and evident across grades and content areas.
- The school has sustained, and continually seeks to expand, key partnerships with community-based resources and organizations.
- The school continues to enrich its curriculum with a broad menu of opportunities in the arts and music.
- The school's inquiry team has been used as a springboard to promote a greater understanding and utilization of performance data.

What the school needs to improve

- Set objectively measurable interim goals for students and ensure that their progress is monitored against targeted benchmarks over time.
- Improve the consistency with which teachers plan for the different needs of their students.
- Develop further opportunities for common planning time and collaboration among teachers across grade and content areas.
- Improve teachers' understanding of best practice by establishing further opportunities for inter-visitation both within and outside the school.

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.

The new principal is leading the school forward using a collaborative team effort. The school has implemented strategies to effectively address areas identified as in need of improvement in the last Quality Review. For example, a student data tracking system has been implemented and its use by teachers is supported by professional development. In addition, good progress is being made to further differentiate instruction based upon the use of interim assessments. Much of this work has been strongly supported by a highly functional school inquiry team. The administration supports the ongoing collaboration of staff in terms of planning and goal setting. The result is positioning the school in support of its mission for all students. The slogan “Eyes on Excellence” has taken hold. Stakeholders all value the collective efforts of teachers, students, support staff and parents, working together, to move the academic agenda of the school. The school has a history of successful magnet programs, particularly in music and the arts, which are being nurtured. The administration is committed to the goal, using the inquiry team as a catalyst, of supporting ongoing staff development and school reform. Difficult budget and staff decisions have been made to better align available resources with needs revealed through student performance analysis. The dedicated teachers are making significant strides in the strategic use of student performance data to drive instructional decisions. Interim, measurable goals for students and staff are not yet developed. While the school is developing skills in further differentiating instruction to meet the specific needs of students, this is not yet consistent across all grades and content areas. There are some limited opportunities for teachers to plan together, but common planning time is not systemic and available for all teachers. Teachers have begun to visit each other and other schools to share best practice, but these visits are voluntary and limited.

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 work of the school’s inquiry team has improved the understanding and use of data by the entire staff. As a result, teachers’ confidence in understanding data to evaluate their students’ progress has improved rapidly over the past year. The school is making great strides in measuring student progress. Members of staff are beginning to use a comprehensive data tracking system in addition to the Citywide tools. A strong focus is placed upon monitoring the performance of special education students and English language learners and they are making progress. The school has a good understanding

of the needs of these students and this has led to the piloting of new curricula programs and teaching approaches to further improve progress. The monitoring of progress has also led to additional Saturday Academy and after-school classes. The administrative team has done a good job of identifying differences in the performance between boys and girls and different ethnic groups. In response, the school has begun to use incentives such as sports to attract students to the after-school program who would most benefit from the additional academic supports. The school is using a number of new periodic interim assessments in English language arts and math this year. Data is not used in the areas of science and social studies, but the school plans to redress this omission.

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 school articulates its primary goal through the concise slogan of “Eyes on Excellence” and it is supported through a collaborative, open-door policy. Leaders emphatically share the priority goals to achieve success with all staff members. In turn, staff members recognize the job they must do to ensure improving student outcomes support whole school improvement. For this reason, teachers, guidance counsellors and the administrative team collaborate to optimize programming decisions and goal setting for students. As one assistant principal stated, “Nothing is written in stone . . . we always ask how we can make it better.” As such, the school is making good headway in meeting student needs more effectively. Teachers use a “skill of the week” calendar along with several new tools to assess and support the progress of struggling learners. Some of the successful new programs include the Jamestown reading program, Wilson reading and Voyager. The school provides extra challenge for higher-achieving students. For example, an eighth grade student currently taking Regents integrated algebra said, “We’re finished with the integrated algebra curriculum and our teacher is starting pre-calculus to get us ready for high school.”

High expectations for all are communicated through revised student and faculty handbooks, use of a ladder of referral and greater parent involvement. Teachers are proactive by making telephone calls to discuss interim progress reports with parents before the official reports cards are issued. There is a high level of responsiveness, where conferences take place with parents to discuss action plans regarding their child’s progress. One student explained, “Teachers make sure that students grasp the lesson and know it well. If not, they try to explain it in a different way using technology and other students helping each other.” Parents report that they have a voice, that their concerns and issues are heard, and that the new principal is easy to talk to and “hands-on”. PTA attendance increased 300% through outreach efforts, celebrations of student success and administrative presence and visibility both within and outside 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.

In an effort to make cross-curricular connections for students, interdisciplinary approaches have been, and continue to be, used by English language arts and social studies teachers.

For example, a “poem in the pocket” activity incorporated literacy across content areas of math and science. The school uses real world connections within the curriculum to engage students. In an English language arts class, reading a non-fiction book about political issues from thirty-five ago students were able to compare and contrast what they read to issues still relevant today in the current presidential campaign. Similarly, several project-based assignments dealt with the 50th year of space exploration, the roles of women in science, and the Little Rock Nine, an important 1957 Arkansas school integration case. Teachers hold themselves accountable and take pride in their work, often requesting the principal, assistant principals, coaches and colleagues to view what they are doing. This has resulted in greater self-reflection of practice and a positive impact on learning and the progress of students. The commitment of time and effort by the principal has raised morale and team effort by the staff.

The staff focuses on the workshop model to facilitate differentiation of instruction. A number of good monitoring systems continually assess student learning. They include interim assessments, low inference transcripts, formal and informal observations, “snapshot” class visits, and conferencing with teachers. Student work evaluated using rubrics is displayed on exhibition boards throughout the building. While teachers have recently begun using reports generated by interim assessments to make more detailed instructional decisions, the differentiation of instruction is not yet evident across all grades and in all content areas. As a result, not all students receive targeted instruction directly related to their strengths and weaknesses. The principal and administrative team realigned resources and staffing in response to a need for greater English language arts and math instructional time. Analysis of student performance trends led to these difficult decisions. The school incorporated additional instructional time into the school day through a school-based option. A part-time teacher was hired to provide English language learners with additional help. The school also purchased new English as a second language and math resources in an effort to address the needs of students deficient in these areas. Interim assessment data indicates that these efforts are having a positive influence on their learning.

Representatives of faculty, parents, and students all report a marked improvement in the culture, tone, morale and expectations among all members of the school community. The mutual trust and respect among stakeholders is highly evident. As one parent stated, “We all want to make the school great, with a common goal of academic success!” The school maintains an average daily attendance of 93.5% through a focused effort that includes parental contact and a clear message to students that good attendance is essential in their preparation for high school and beyond.

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.

The cabinet meets every morning and debriefs at the end of each day. This frequency of communication has improved the alignment and coordination of effort, but there are still some inconsistencies across grades. One example is how deans on each grade handle disciplinary issues. The school uses a variety of effective strategies to regularly observe, assess and improve teaching practice and student learning. Some teachers choose to visit one another’s classes and share best practices. However, this has not yet become formalized and systemic and therefore has little impact on improving the overall quality of instruction. While some teachers have visited other schools, opportunities are limited.

The inquiry team designed a needs assessment and administered it to the staff. This enabled teachers to have input into their own professional needs. In addition, in-house professional development focuses upon the use of interim assessment data. As a result, teachers are better equipped to recognize and address specific skill deficiencies among their students. Teachers also avail themselves of off-site workshop opportunities when they arise. There are plans to revitalize a United Federation of Teachers center as a staff resource laboratory. The school effectively supports new teachers in a variety of ways. These include the new teacher-mentoring program, the school's partnership support organization, the on-site literacy and math coaches and a peer buddy system.

Students and parents reference and value the family-like atmosphere of the school. The visible presence of the principal, administrators, deans and teachers within and outside the building, along with clarified and refined procedures, contributes to the smooth operation of the school. Partnerships with community organizations such as the Federation of Italian American Organizations, the Council for Unity, and the Junior Tennis League supplement the school's programs. In addition, the resources of cultural institutions such as Carnegie Hall and the Metropolitan Museum of Art contribute to the richness and depth of the school's curriculum. The high expectations for students in the musical strings and woodwind magnet programs were evident when they played complex twelfth-grade pieces well.

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 staff piloted several interim goal-setting initiatives among selected English language arts and math teachers. For example, all new English language arts teachers assigned students to write their own goals in an essay. The students then revise their essays each quarter and their work is displayed on an exhibition board. In math, some teachers use a skill standards "met / not met" chart that is incorporated into student's work portfolios. While these are commendable initiatives, the interim goal-setting process is not yet a systemic practice within the school.

Interim goal setting for teachers takes place through the processes of observation, voluntary inter-visitation, and walkthroughs with feedback. Teachers are beginning to use periodic assessment data to adjust their plans. For example, some teachers use Scantron item analyses to determine where the students are underachieving, in order to adjust the mini-lesson. Some teachers question why they should modify their lessons based upon the misconception that interim and predictive assessments "don't count". This exemplifies the need for a deeper understanding of the role of formative assessments as opposed to the traditional understanding of assessments as only summative tools.

The school leadership team has a number of sub-committees that are evaluating different aspects of the curriculum. This has led to decisions to supplement IMPACT math for lower-achieving students and introduce Voyager and Americas' Choice curricula to provide more highly structured approaches. These decisions become the basis of revisions to the school's Comprehensive Education Plan. Diagnostic assessments are effectively used by the administrative team to make decisions about professional development. School leadership, through the strategic utilization of the inquiry team, has shifted the morale and resultant commitment of all stakeholders in support of excellence.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: David A Boody 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 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		

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