



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Dr. Betty Shabazz School

Elementary-Middle School 298

**85 Watkins Street
Brooklyn
NY 11212**

Principal: Yvonne Graham

Dates of review: May 22 - 23, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Donald Conyers

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Dr. Betty Shabazz is an elementary-middle school serving students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 84% Black, 15% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 89.1%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 99% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and other school leaders have a clear vision for the future of the school and are creating plans to meet those aspirations.
- Teachers have a sound understanding of the academic needs of English language learners and special education students.
- The school successfully implements a systemic attendance and tardiness solutions plan.
- The school conveys high expectations to students and parents regarding continued academic progress.
- The professional development program supports the school's initiatives and emerging issues, thereby improving instruction.
- The school has developed appropriate partnerships to support the advancement of students learning and personal growth.
- The instructional leaders use the budget thoughtfully to promote the realization of the academic goals of the school.
- The teachers hold themselves accountable for both the progress of their students and their own professional growth.
- The school runs smoothly, to ensure that students make the most of learning opportunities.

What the school needs to improve

- Maximize collaborative opportunities in teacher planning and goal setting that positively impact on student academic improvement
- Share whole school goals with all members of the school community in an effort to maximize goal realization.
- Increase the support given to teachers by consistently enabling the practice of inter-visitation and peer observations.
- Develop a data system that promotes the understanding of student progress over time enabling leaders to make critical instructional and planning decisions.
- Rely on regular data outputs to drive successive learning steps.
- Increase the number of ways to improve the school's provision of information to parents to engender greater support.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The school runs smoothly, thereby increasing successful learning. It is identified as a place for performing arts and students enjoy the performing arts, although for the last few years opportunities have been limited. However, plans for improvement include a totally infused performing arts program with full-time staff working in dedicated studios. The school has made some advances in the use of technology for instruction since last school year, although students wish they had more computers in the classrooms. Teachers use Acuity and Scantron adequately to assist student learning. The management of data supports monitoring, goal setting, planning and immediate responses to learning needs to some extent. However, school leaders have not addressed the use of technology for the strategic management of data in a broader sense.

The school has a proficient professional development program but still has not satisfied the important need to provide further opportunities to develop peer observations and inter-visitations. Teachers welcome additional opportunities to self-select their professional learning topics. Based upon the various activities that teachers do with students, they have a sound understanding of student progress. However, the need to consistently rely on data to set goals and plan collaboratively is less than proficient. The school has done some carefully focused work gathering student subgroup data, making comparisons and strategic decisions based upon evident need. For example, after comparative review, the school decided to focus heavily on a group of special education students to understand successful ways to promote progress and achievement within this population. This became the work of the inquiry team. This team works together effectively to consider instructional options for students and to make available and track the value of resources provided as they relate to student advancement.

The school endeavours to increase parental involvement but struggles with getting a sizeable proportion of the parents to participate actively in school life and the on-site education of their children. Some parents give their time to perform essential functions on a daily basis, and some of these parents are on the school leadership team. However, the school has not done enough to ensure that the students and parents of this school community know and participate in realizing the school improvement goals. As school leaders continue to unify as an instructional unit, they have not shown global understanding of formative and summative information in order to support teacher instructional decisions and to adjust improvement planning that leads to student achievement.

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.

Teachers gather data frequently in the areas of math, science, social studies and English language arts. Many of the teachers suitably use a variety of methods to identify learning needs and progress made by students. School leaders adequately collect summative results made available through NYstart to measure progress and achievement of students. The principal has compared the 2008 preliminary English language arts results with 2007 scores to verify effectiveness amongst the student groups that the academic support practitioners support. Most teachers are diligent in collecting data that shows student progress, but not all teachers use the data when planning together to improve student results.

Comparisons of individual student performance and progress are made from class to class and across grades to measure progress and needed growth in areas of concern to the school. The school compares its overall performance against its own past performance and with similar schools to ensure it is improving each year in tested subjects and levels of achievement. The school is fully aware of the performance of English language learners, special education students and different ethnic groups. For example, during the 2007 reading test 31% of Hispanic students and 31% of Black students scored at Levels 3 and 4. Consequently, the school concentrated its focus on these students.

While teachers and leaders gather a lot of data, leaders still have not responded adequately to the need to develop systems to store, display and interrogate the data in order to precisely influence strategic decisions and effectively monitor progress at student and class levels.

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 underdeveloped with proficient features.

Teachers write plans that address broad expectations aligned with standards and long-range improvement. Teachers report that, "in most cases we plan alone." They welcome any opportunity to plan during the day with other colleagues in order to strengthen the curriculum. The school has not enabled teachers to plan activities and create units of study that meet the standards. Additionally, most of the teachers, when planning, have not used the data well enough to create specific goals and targets with precisely measurable outcomes for individual students and classes. The principal indicated, "This year is the first year that they have gotten into planning and setting goals." The school has created a detailed intervention plan for students in greatest need of improvement, resulting in an effective range of services before, during and after school. The school also focuses on holdover students as a group of special interest. This year it found various ways to create new and exciting corrective measures,

including Headsprout, an innovative technology program. Service providers instruct and assess these students regularly to promote and gauge their learning. Middle school and early childhood teachers consistently plan and provide sound instruction to the students in the areas of English language arts and math. The school is poised to improve its goal setting in the areas of social studies and science. Students are very concerned about their academic success. They share in the responsibility of aiming for high achievement along with their teachers. Scantron enables teachers and students to develop learning goals in the areas of math and reading, and teachers confer with students to monitor learning activity and progress against these goals. The school struggles with parent attendance at workshops about student learning and regular meetings. The principal is aware that additional options like newsletters or email transmissions are not broadly utilized to share the school's goals with parents. Resultantly, the parents are not aware of the school goals and cannot participate in the support of goal realization.

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

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school utilizes an array of instructional materials that support the interest and curriculum frameworks set by New York State. School providers use the interim data from the Wilson program, Everyday and Impact math along with other supplementary aids like Math Advantage to become informed about student achievement. Social studies is integrated into literacy classes and teachers analyze exam results to gauge student growth. Science experiments serve as another way to assess student knowledge. Students enjoy science and want more experiments.

The school's scheduling highlights the extended literacy and math blocks that effectively enable teachers to create learning options through small group work, one-on-one and project-based activity. Teachers use student data to differentiate instruction in the areas of math and English language arts. This tiering of instruction is effective due to the targeting of specific levels of challenge. However, it does not yet extend to other subject areas. Some students enjoy theater arts and recorder playing and after-school instrumental band. Others are involved with 'Talks with Wolves' where they are engaged in learning and presenting slave narratives through visual and performing arts. The art teacher enriches student learning by anchoring lessons to literacy and art goals.

The principal's decisions about allocating financial resources have led to improved activity and learning. For example, the school has purchased seven interactive white boards and additional computers to support student interest and learning. Teachers are accountable to student learning and want to make sure that they use all resources and personnel to improve their teaching. A more rigorous focus on student attendance and lateness has caused improvement. One student stated, "When I am absent, I lose."

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 principal and other school leaders spend a great deal of time in classrooms observing and supporting the teaching. This results in a good understanding of needs and strengths among teachers, thereby increasing ongoing teacher exposure to a cascade of professional services that address support in content areas and pedagogy. Teachers participate in "lunch and learns", study groups, one-on-one conferences to address substantive issues arising from data and knowledge of best practices. Literacy coaches coordinate with classroom teachers and school leaders to address the goals outlined in the professional development plan. However, there procedures to frequent enable inter-visitations and peer observations are not in place.

The principal is ready to facilitate teacher self-selection opportunities to increase teacher expertise. New teachers are nurtured and surrounded by capable, experienced staff who mentor and help to develop good teaching practices. Mentors exceed the weekly requirement because they believe that a solid foundation will effectively promote development of expertise.

The school recognizes that the academic and personal development of students is of critical importance. "Escape it" supports conflict resolution and anger management concerns. The school enjoys competitions hosted by Chess in the Schools program and grades 6 and 7 males participate in "Rise to the Occasion", a mentoring project dedicated to, among many things, life skills. Students work better within the calm school environment and work to improve it daily.

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

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school community supports the principal's vision for the school. They note her determination to prepare students in a holistic manner, to include the arts, rigorous activity and self-improvement. Teachers' analysis and review of data, especially in the elementary grades, has led to thorough evaluation of student results. Teachers collect a range of evidence to show short- and longer-term progress of each student and each class. The inquiry team continually collects data in its quest to understand student progress. Its members fashion their plans in accordance with the analysis of data and the school's skill focus found within the school improvement plan, where interim goals with time frames provide direction and focus. Coaches, fellow teachers, the learning support organization and consulting agencies work congruently with the school's improvement plan. Its construction delineates small steps toward achievement of the plan along with opportunities to monitor progress and evaluate success. Teacher data shows progress relative to student command of skills and content knowledge. School leaders do less than a proficient job with the consistent and updated management of summative and formative data in order to understand the strengths and weakness in student achievement. Thus, strategic plans that address improved student outcomes are somewhat limited.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Dr. Betty Shabazz 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