



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Sheepshead Bay High School**

**High School 495**

**3000 Avenue X  
Brooklyn  
NY 11235**

**Principal: Ms Reesa Levy**

**Dates of review: November 28 - 30, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Colin Henderson**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Sheepshead Bay is a high school with 2678 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 64% Black, 13% Hispanic, 11% White, and 11% Asian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 78%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school makes good use a wide range of data to check on how well each student is doing and to help them improve.
- The range of learning activities within and outside of the school day is outstanding and engages and motivates students.
- Effective procedures enable the school to provide a calm and purposeful learning atmosphere.
- The principal has a high profile and gives a clear direction to the work of the school.
- Excellent relationships between staff and students encourage mutual respect and provide good support and guidance.
- Staff work well together to plan carefully to meet students' needs and to share good practice.
- The Fast Track Academy helps over-age and under-credited students to make rapid progress.
- The school provides well for the differing needs of special education students and includes them successfully in its programs.
- The school works hard at checking and encouraging students to attend regularly.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to improve the quality of instruction by broadening the range of teaching strategies to engage students and meet their learning needs.
- Ensure that improvement plans have clear, measurable short-term goals which enable progress to be tracked towards longer term goals.
- Monitor and compare the performance and progress of different ethnic groups.
- Ensure that all faculties use data equally effectively to plan programs that accelerate students' learning.

## 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 well developed.**

The principal and key staff provide clear vision and a strong drive for improvement. As a result, the school has made great strides forward. Improvements in students' behavior and attitudes have resulted in a more consistent focus on learning. The principal is highly visible around the school and has high expectations of her students and her staff to which they respond well. She works closely with her staff to build very effective guidance and support for students. As one student said, "she cares about each of us; I know things start with me!" Good organization underpins an orderly and purposeful working environment that enables students to enjoy school and respect each other. Staff focus strongly upon raising students' performance. They gather a good range of data on students' personal and academic development and use it with increasing effectiveness to guide their instruction and help students to progress further. Students value the very wide range of programs in which they can participate during and outside the school day.

Staff plan together effectively sharing instructional ideas and often watching each other teach to see the range of strategies used. Some, but not all faculties use data very effectively to realign the curriculum to meet students' needs and to match individual students to specific programs. This helps to improve students' performance, for example in environmental science, and students value this individual guidance that assists them to make better progress. Students in the Fast Track Academy make great gains in acquiring additional credits towards their graduation. The school includes special education students fully within its program. It caters for a wide range of differing needs and, by successfully introducing a broader range of teaching approaches including a cooperative team teaching class, has advanced these students' progress.

The principal and her assistant principals work hard to improve the quality of teaching. They make frequent lesson observations which, together with a careful analysis of student data, have guided many teachers to improve their instruction. Some teachers use a good range of different approaches, including group activities that involve and engage students successfully in learning. This is not, however, consistent practice.

The school has effective procedures to check that different faculties are helping students to achieve well. Teaching staff in each faculty, under the direction of an assistant principal, are accountable for their students' progress. They use data to identify any concerns and develop plans showing how they will improve with clear long term measurable goals. While some check rigorously the reasons behind this deficiency, this is not consistent in every faculty. In addition, some faculties do not consistently use

interim goals to check if students are on target to achieve these goals or if the goals are sufficiently challenging.

The lead inquiry team began meeting in October. It is currently developing an individualized profile for each English language learner and a training program to make teachers more aware of the language aspects linked to Regents examinations. The school has made some progress since the last review particularly on improving attendance; sharing information with students and evaluating the Fast Track program. Progress has been less secure in ensuring student engagement and using data rigorously to target improvement .

## **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 school has very good systems for collecting information on students' personal and academic development which give staff a clear picture of what the students can do. Data on credit accumulation, pass rates, attendance and lateness., together with assessment data and support programs, is contained in a detailed transcript for each individual student. These transcripts are updated at the end of each of six marking periods. Grade and faculty meetings consistently use data to check each student's progress. The progress of different groups of students is monitored closely to identify concerns, although the school does not pay enough attention to analyzing its data on different ethnic groups. Faculty teams use the data to identify any learning deficiencies and to allocate individual students to specific learning programs. When the data showed that special education students were not making good enough progress, staff introduced a broader range of teaching strategies, such as collaborative team teaching and summer projects. This resulted in higher expectations of these students' performance and a noticeable improvement in progress. Similarly, data analysis of the Regents' results of English Language Learner students identified reasons for their slower progress. As a result new classes were set up and the curriculum changed to make it more engaging.

The principal and her assistant principals make very good use of the data in their twice weekly meetings to monitor and compare the performance of each faculty and hold faculties to account for underperformance. This has led to changes in faculty programs, with good professional development for staff to support these changes. While this has led to improvements in some subjects, for example, English Language Arts, it has not been as effective in all faculties. The principal makes effective use of data to compare the school's performance with similar schools.

**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.**

The school uses data well to check how each individual student is doing and to adjust instructional plans to improve any deficiencies. For example, they use the students' grade 8 reading scores together with their own assessments, to identify students for the Read 180 program. This has improved students' reading skills and led to improved performance in other subjects. Staff share information with students and their parents to let them know where students have been successful and what needs improvement. Faculty teams use the data to set specific improvement goals for students and for the faculty to achieve by the end of the year. However, they do not rigorously check whether they are on target to achieve these goals, for example at the end of each marking period.

The school is working hard to raise students' academic expectations to a consistently high level. It encourages each student, with support from their parents, to 'expect' to go to college and devises strategies, such as the Honors program, to help them to achieve this. Staff, particularly the guidance counselors, use detailed information to develop a plan for each student to graduate. As a result, more students are achieving this goal. The Fast Track Academy has been very successful in accelerating the progress of over-age and under-credited students, some of whom earn 18 credits in one year. Guidance counselors and the parent coordinator provide parents with detailed information through report cards and frequent phone-calls about the school's expectations. Many parents value this communication, although not enough actively engage with the school to improve their child's learning.

**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 principal works closely with her administration and faculty staff to ensure that the core curriculum is focused on meeting the students' needs and the requirements of the Regents' examinations. The curriculum is richly enhanced by the very wide range of activities within and outside of the school day. As one student commented, "everyone can find something to enjoy in this school".

Most faculties plan carefully to set clear goals to raise student outcomes. For example, when data identified deficiencies in student outcomes in science the faculty changed part of the science program to rectify the problem. Assistant principals are held accountable for the performance of their faculties and for checking that students are engaged fully by interesting teaching. Many identify where professional development is needed, for example, to improve the use of differentiated instruction, although the impact of professional development has not been consistent across all classrooms, and some shortcomings remain.

The principal has worked closely with her staff to establish a calm and orderly school. Effective procedures ensure that students feel safe. There is a high level of mutual trust and respect between staff and students. Students value this good quality care and support and most respond well to the clear expectations of their behavior. The school's rigorous monitoring procedures are improving student attendance and tardiness. There are suitable incentives to reward good attendance and to help long term absentees to catch up. The positive working environment in the school, together with an outstanding

range of learning activities both within and outside the school day, encourages students to enjoy and attend school.

**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.**

Teachers receive very good feedback from frequent lesson observations by the administration and a full-time teacher trainer. These observations, together with an analysis of assessments, have helped identify areas for professional development, such as the use of differentiated instruction. Feedback to teachers has improved the quality of their instruction, although there is still too much inconsistency, especially in the degree to which instruction engages and motivates students, for example through group work. Staff teams meet in common time and benefit from the school's open, supportive culture by sharing good practice and observe each other teaching. They follow-up these sessions with further visits to classrooms to see how well new ideas are being implemented in the classrooms. The support and guidance given to new teachers by other teachers and the teacher trainer is very effective in improving their instructional skills, particularly their use of data to understand student progress and their next steps in learning.

The school makes effective use of a good range of guidance and advice services to meet the wide range of students' needs in a multicultural community. Counsellors from the Jewish Community Board and Arab American support agencies provide good personal support to specific groups of students. The partnerships with outside entities support students' academic and personal growth very 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 principal has a clear vision for the future development of the school .which is shared by the administration. They use past and current data very well to set clear goals for improving the school. This has already led to significant improvements in students' response and behavior, including attendance, and in better quality support and guidance for students, particularly those with emotional and social difficulties. All students, especially those who have special educational needs, feel part of this supportive learning community. Faculty and grade staff use periodic assessments to review how well each individual and group of students are doing. Some, but not all, evaluate the effect of interventions and use this information to make strategic decisions to improve outcomes, such as realigning an aspect of the curriculum or changing a program to the student's advantage. Although challenging long term goals are set for raising students' achievement, the school's improvement plans lack interim goals. As a result, the school cannot check whether its longer term goals are realistic and whether it is on track to achieve them.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

|  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>SCHOOL NAME: Sheepshead Bay High School</b> | Δ | ➤ | ✓ | + | ◇ |
| <b>Quality Score</b>                           |   |   |   | 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 |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>  |   |   |   | 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 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 |   |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>  |   |   |   | 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 |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>   |   |   |   |   | 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 |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>   |   |   |   |   | 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 |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>  |   |   |   |   | X |