



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Booker T. Washington School

Middle School 54

**103 West 107 Street
New York
NY 10025**

Principal: Elana Elster

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Booker T. Washington is a middle school with 885 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 20% Black, 28% Hispanic, 42% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 10% 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 93%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides inspirational leadership and, with very effective support from senior leaders, continues to bring about school improvement.
- Leaders and teachers make good use of the data to chart students' progress, to improve instruction and raise achievement.
- The school's multi-disciplinary support teams work very well together to set appropriate academic and personal goals for individual students in need of help.
- The curriculum is exciting and innovative in providing programs which engage students and considerably extend their learning experiences.
- The school has developed a rigorous system for collecting and analyzing data which is used systematically to set goals for grades and subjects.
- The school's strategic plans for school improvement are of high quality and successfully drive forward changes.
- The clear vision for the future of the school is shared and promoted very well by all members of the school community.
- Teachers share good practices to support each other very effectively and this makes an excellent contribution to their professional development.
- Effective support for English language learners and special education students helps them to grow into confident learners and to achieve well.
- Displays of student artwork create a bright and pleasant learning environment and help enhance students' self-esteem.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop collection and analysis of data further to get a clear overview of the performance and progress of different groups of students.
- Improve students' performance in English language arts to match that in math by consistently challenging the higher achievers.
- Develop further ways to involve parents in their children's education and in the activities of the school community.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The school has successfully addressed the issues raised in the last Quality Review and brought about changes efficiently to ensure that its students receive high quality education. It sets clear and measurable goals for improving all aspects of its work. The arrangements for professional development are now very effective and, as a result, teachers adapt instruction well to meet the needs of all students. The principal has instilled a strong sense of community where trust and respect underpins the work of the school. She has been well supported by her staff, students and parents in moving the school forward. Teachers are given ample opportunities to share good practices through intervisitations and various external courses. Students appreciate the opportunities available for them and develop a strong sense of responsibility to the community. They are proud of their school and grow up to be confident and independent learners.

The principal is insightful and believes in providing equal opportunities for all. She has successfully revised and implemented a curriculum that enriches the learning experiences of all students and supports their academic and personal development well. The curriculum is particularly designed to motivate students to assess their own progress and aim higher. This has resulted in an increasing number of students achieving Levels 3 and 4, although more so in math than in English language arts. Data is collected from a wide range of sources including the school's own assessment system, test results and results from the intervention programs. It is analyzed well to aid teachers' instructional planning. However, it is not sufficiently developed yet to give a clear overview of the performance of different groups of students. The Inquiry Team compares students' performance to select its focus group and has a good understanding of how to adapt instruction to the learning styles of these students.

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 consistently collects a great deal of data from many different sources. Thorough analysis of State and predictive assessments enables teachers to gain a clear understanding of students' achievement levels and how well they progress as they move from grade to grade. The school also generates its own data throughout the year.

Interim assessments, along with students' work folders, notebooks and writing portfolios, provide teachers with cumulative information about their students. Teachers use these results very effectively to monitor each student's progress over time. Clear and effective data analysis of the progress of special education students and English language learners means that staff are fully aware of the emotional, social and language needs of each of these students. A well co-ordinated team of specialists and service providers for special education students ensures that appropriate planning is made to meet their individual needs. English language learners are assessed by the State test for English proficiency and they are supported effectively through appropriate group organizations, providing them with additional in-class specialist support. This is helping these students to learn within the school's regular program alongside their peers and to improve their test results, especially in math. The school compares its performance in relation to similar schools by analyzing Department of Education peer group scores and through regular meetings of the principals within the school's network. Senior leaders, teachers and support services staff within the school have a clear knowledge and understanding of the performance of different groups of students and use the information from progress reports of the individual classes. However, the data system does not, as yet, give a clear overview of students' progress in terms of ethnicity and gender.

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.

Teachers have developed a good level of expertise in using the whole range of data to identify the academic needs of individual students. They use this information well to set short- and long-term goals across the grades and subjects for all students. This has resulted in setting up specific intervention programs to support students to achieve their goals, such as the "Early Academy" program. This is run before school to accelerate the learning of students who are underachieving, including those who are at the borderline of Levels 3 and 4. As a result, an increasing number of students have achieved well enough to join the program "Delta" for higher achieving students, especially in math. Many English language learners have joined the "Delta" math program as a result of this, even though they have not yet reached sufficient proficiency in English to join the same program for English language arts.

Staff are highly committed to a collaborative approach to setting goals. Leaders, teachers, the intervention support team and students work together to make sure that goals are matched to the academic and personal needs of individual students and are measurable and time bound. Students know their goals and assess their progress independently as well as with their teachers.

Parents are well informed of the school's goals, and of their children's progress in all areas of the curriculum, through the parents' handbook, newsletters and report meetings. Parents value the principal's expertise in improving the school. They appreciate her open door policy and her ability "to stand up to any issue that effects school improvement," as one parent comments. The school also provides a wide range of meetings and programs for parents to understand and support their children's academic and personal development. However, many parents do not attend these programs.

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

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The school has done really well at aligning instructional strategies to school goals. The curriculum has been redesigned thoughtfully to provide the opportunity for all students to gain equal access in all programs and subjects and to succeed. A variety of intervention strategies and programs have been introduced over the past two years so that students make good progress starting from their entry level. Consequently, they develop confidence in taking ownership of their own learning and strive to achieve high standards. Good programs for art, music, film and foreign languages greatly enrich the students’ learning and experience. There is an impressive display of students’ artwork throughout the school which celebrates their talents in arts and creativity.

An established philosophy of mutual trust, respect and enjoyment permeates the work of the school. Students regard the school and staff highly. As one student summed up, “Teachers are really disappointed if we don’t do well. They prepare us not only for our time at school but also for life beyond the school.”

Teachers work well together in teams to plan and discuss most effective ways of aligning and adapting their instruction to the needs of students. The budget is managed and used efficiently to benefit students’ academic and personal development. This is reflected clearly in the creation of new posts, which are having a positive impact on instructional practice and students’ achievement. There are thorough procedures for monitoring attendance and students are consistently made aware of the impact of attendance on their achievement.

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.

The principal and her administration monitor instruction rigorously and provide staff with a systematic structure for their professional development. Regular planned formal and informal classroom visits ensure that all teachers are observed and have the opportunity to have detailed informal and written feedback, which informs professional development plans. There is a planned program for teachers to visit each other’s lessons across the subjects so that they are able to share good practice and promote cross-curricular links consistently. The principal believes in making the whole process an empowering experience for her staff and promotes an ongoing dialogue between the administration and staff. Staff are unanimous in their appreciation of the high level of support and assistance they receive from the principal.

The in-house professional arrangements are further strengthened by well-established links with Columbia University Teachers’ College. Induction procedures are equally supportive and enable new teachers to make a good start to their career. A full-time

mentor teacher has been appointed this year to ensure consistent support for new teachers, as well as other teachers in need of assistance. Teachers are encouraged to reflect and evaluate the impact of their professional development on their practice at the end of the year and they appreciate this opportunity. One new teacher, reflecting on her first year at school, wrote, "I feel like a teacher."

The school is run smoothly and is managed efficiently. It places strong emphasis on developing the whole child by supporting both their academic and personal development equally well. The guidance team and counselors work alongside teachers and leaders to ensure that students make the best possible progress towards their goals. This is further enhanced by the timely intervention of a family counseling service and tutoring agencies. The school works very closely with the health centers to promote healthy lifestyles for its students.

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

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school has a systematic process for monitoring its progress and reviewing its goals through regular administrative team meetings. It makes good use of the data and feeds this into the planning for future improvement. The leaders work very effectively with staff to set short and long-term goals that are based on the scores from the external tests and the school's own periodic assessments. The school cabinet meets at regular interval to check if the goals have been met or not and successfully revises, if required, the planning and practice to achieve them. Individual teachers use the data from periodic assessments very effectively to monitor each student's progress during the year and, whenever needed, adjust their instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of all students. These measures are having a positive impact on students' achievement and this is reflected in the improved scores in the State tests.

The Comprehensive Education Plan contains evaluation of these initiatives in terms of their impact on students' performance and prioritizes future goals, adapting them as required, to accelerate students' learning. For example, the two programs, "Delta" and "C.O.R.E" are consistently reviewed in consultation with leaders, teachers and all intervention teams to track students' progress. The "Early Academy" program is also constantly reviewed to ensure that all students benefit from it.

The school is well aware that although the test results have improved, further focus is needed to raise achievement in English language arts and for higher-achieving students. The writing program and the teaching of literacy skills across the curriculum are beginning to have a positive impact on students' English language skills.

The principal has developed cohesive and effective teamwork among the cabinet members and staff to move the school forward towards its goals. The whole school community share the principal's vision and staff are committed to achieving the school's goals.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Booker T. Washington 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