



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

William Sherman School

Elementary School 087

**160 West 78 Street
New York
NY 10024**

Principal: Jacqui Getz

Dates of review: December 11 - 12, 2007

Lead Reviewer: John Collings

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

William Sherman is an elementary school with 901 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 17% Black, 22% Hispanic, 54% White and 7% Asian and other students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 94.5%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is visionary with high expectations that have enabled the school to improve significantly since the last Quality Review.
- Strong leadership of the cabinet is improving teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Data is well used to monitor the performance of groups of students and to enable the school to support them appropriately.
- The school is beginning to use data well to monitor student progress, to improve instruction, and to adjust the curriculum and staffing.
- New report cards have improved the information given to parents regarding the performance and progress of their children.
- Special education students are very well monitored and supported.
- Good use of the schedule enables the school to use cluster teachers very effectively to provide good opportunities for professional development.
- Good use of classroom observations, intervisitations and individual support through good professional development is improving teaching and learning.
- There are good links with parents, supporting all students in their learning.
- Good links with outside entities significantly enhance the curriculum and students' learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Raise teachers' expectations to ensure that higher-achieving students are fully challenged and reach their full potential.
- Further develop classroom differentiation to ensure that students work needs are based securely on the prior achievement.
- Use the good data to set realistic and aspirational goals for student achievement and monitor progress.
- Continue to articulate the school's goals so they are more clearly understood by the wider school community.
- Improve the breadth of the curriculum by making greater use of technology to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Consolidate knowledge and develop integrated planning further to apply understanding and skills learnt in one subject across the curriculum.

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 drive and vision of the principal, and the support and dedication of the cabinet and coaches, have resulted in significant improvements since the last Quality Review. The improvement has encompassed assessment, differentiation, student goal setting and monitoring different groups of students. There has been insufficient time for the development of whole-school goals and the monitoring of student progress to demonstrate significant impact. However, the school is now on a firm footing to make further improvements by embedding the good practices already in place.

A wealth of data is used well to monitor the performance of students, and increasingly to predict students' achievements and monitor their progress. Special education students make good progress and are well monitored. The school is using new systems to monitor the performance of groups of students very well. Newly designed report cards are now more clearly informing parents about their children's performance and progress.

Good professional development allows teachers to make better use of data to set student goals and to plan increasingly differentiated work for the range of abilities in their classes. Teachers are also beginning to see the value of setting realistic and aspirational goals and monitoring students' progress towards them. These developments however, are not fully embedded in all classes. Teachers are becoming more familiar with the changes in accountability for the progress of students in their care, rather than simply their performance.

There is a good curriculum overall making very good use of excellent opportunities. For example, the New York Natural History Museum on the doorstep is used as a true extension of classrooms. The school is beginning to make greater use of integrated planning. However, the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning to engage students is underdeveloped.

Good liaison between the school and parents stems from the hard work of the parent coordinator resulting in good parental support and attendance. The list of outside entities is very long and makes a significant contribution to the academic and personal growth of students, who rate the school highly.

Until recently, the school had few long-term goals. These are now being clarified, through discussion, so that they can be articulated more easily to the whole school community. The inquiry team has met and, through good use of data and discussion, has selected students they wish to monitor. The intervention strategies for these students are in the process of being developed.

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has made significant improvements in the use of assessment data provided by the State and the City, and in the quality of its own ongoing assessments. Data is reviewed at monthly meetings and is used well to identify of student underperformance. These reviews are used to provide students with academic or personal support where necessary.

The school uses data well to monitor performance but not as effectively to monitor student progress or to set long-term goals and check progress towards them. This also applies to the monitoring of English language learners. The performance and progress of special education students, however, is well monitored through their teacher, individual education plans, the pupil personnel team, referrals for students 'at risk', the special education teacher support services and collaborative team teaching classes.

The school is particularly good at correlating the performance of different groups of students through the inquiry team, especially with pertinent criteria such as travel, lateness and absence. Comparisons with previous performance and progress show students make good progress overall. However, the school is not satisfied with this and is striving through professional development to raise expectations of teachers to improve students' progress.

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.

Teachers generally have high expectations of students through setting of individual goals and differentiating work but monitoring their progress towards goals is less well developed. However, the inquiry team uses data well to identify students whose performance and progress is a particular focus including, for example, middle and higher achievers. The school is good at improving the progress and performance of students in the greatest need of improvement.

Whole-school goals are evolving through consultation and are being developed to improve clarity and accountability. The principal, the cabinet, coaches and the vast majority teachers have high expectations of students, conveyed through the recently revised report cards sharing the next steps students should take in order to improve. They do not, however, identify clearly enough the progress students are making. Specific workshops have been established as a result of a parental survey. This ensures high expectations are shared effectively through a very good program of monthly workshops developed by the parent coordinator. The parent coordinator also directs useful information from parents to teachers and the school is very receptive to support from parents and responds well to comments or queries about their children's

education. Parents support the school and think a good dialogue encourages teaching and 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 proficient.

A good curriculum provides good assessment data from running records. Every Day Math, Teacher’s College writing and reading, and ‘on demand’ assessments give a good indication of students’ abilities. The curriculum is also broad and includes a strong emphasis on art. The integrated curriculum already in place is a focus for further development. Creative and collaborative planning is developing greater consistency in delivery of the curriculum to ensure that knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in one class are applied and consolidated in other subjects. However, the school makes insufficient use of technology to broaden the curriculum and enhance teaching and learning. Very good use of visits and visitors enhances the curriculum. The proximity of the New York Natural History Museum makes it easy to use it as a virtual extension of the classrooms.

The school has responded well to the recent changes in teachers’ accountability. Teachers are being held responsible for each student’s progress rather than simply their performance. This has resulted in the school identifying that higher achieving students are not necessarily challenged sufficiently to make effective progress. Teachers are differentiating their instruction through a range of expectations for different students based on their prior achievement, but this is not sufficiently embedded to ensure all students reach their full potential. Classes are stimulating. Although students find lessons engaging and they enjoy coming to school, some find the work too easy at times.

Good use of the budget and innovative scheduling has enabled the school to use its staffing well to create good opportunities for professional development. This has been used effectively to address the use of data and improve differentiation, which were identified as issues in the last Quality Review. Professional development is differentiated to meet the needs of all teachers and as a result is beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Although not all teachers are ‘on the same page’, they work well together in the best interests of students. Students trust their teachers and think they are taught well. They feel safe and have high aspirations for their futures. Through the hard work of the parent coordinator and the involvement of parents, attendance is high.

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.

Classroom observations are used well to support teachers in developing differentiation in their classrooms. The school has some 50 staff and inevitably some teachers use this

approach more successfully than others. The administration uses data well to develop differentiated professional development to help teachers improve teaching and learning in their classes. The emphasis is on supporting teachers to apply criteria and agreed rubrics consistently so that the resulting data is meaningful and consistent. This is being achieved by grade teachers moderating student work within agreed levels. Thus, the data created is sufficiently reliable to begin to make predictions about student achievement.

Teachers new to the profession and/or to the school are effectively supported through use of 'buddies', mentors and grade collegiality. They are also well supported through very knowledgeable coaches and input from Teachers' College. Students are given good support in personal and academic development through the guidance counselor and, where appropriate, a psychologist. The very good use of peer conflict mediation is of particular note, where grade 5 students are trained to act as mediators for younger students.

The dedication, tenacity and leadership of the principal means that the school runs very well. She has initiated many changes and has raised expectations of students and staff, creating a school with an increasing focus on student learning and progress. There is an impressive list of partnerships with outside entities, including, museums, theaters, bookshops, high schools, colleges, authors and illustrators. These have a significant impact on widening students' awareness and understanding of the world and on their academic and personal growth.

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 very clear vision for the school's future. Her commitment and resoluteness is inspiring. Her leadership skills are the main reason for the significant progress made since the previous Quality Review. The assistant principals and coaches share this commitment. The faculty has used the last review well to identify long-term and interim goals. However, while short-term goals are understood by teachers, long-term goals are less well articulated and understood by the whole school community. The school is developing clearer goals for students to monitor progress but, although these are being created and implemented, they are not yet fully in place. Use of data is helping teachers develop student goals. Teachers are being supported in the use of data to differentiate instruction to create realistic and aspirational goals to meet students' needs.

The school has used data very effectively to identify changes needed and has implemented the necessary professional development to address areas of weakness. This is beginning to have a positive influence on teaching and learning although, as it is still in the early stages of development, its impact is limited.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: William Sherman 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 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	
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?				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?				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		