



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Shorac Kappock School**

**Elementary School 098**

**512 West 212 Street  
New York  
NY 10034**

**Principal: Maritza A. Rodriguez**

**Dates of review: November 26 – 27, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Anne Evanoff**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Shorac Kappock is an elementary school with 618 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 4. The school population comprises 1% Black, 97% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 50% English language learners and 5% 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 92.87%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility.

There is a large population of English language learners at Public School 098. The school offers a gifted and talented dual language program which provides students with appropriately challenging standards-based learning experiences.

One of the most distinctive qualities about PS 098 is the long service of the staff, many of whom have been at the school for more than fifteen years. The principal has begun her second year at PS 98.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has established effective systems and structures for gathering and analyzing data to better understand the learning needs of students.
- The principal clearly and effectively shares whole school goals with all stakeholders to focus the community on school improvement and to direct classroom planning.
- The principal uses data strategically to make key decisions in budgeting, staffing, and scheduling for school improvement purposes.
- The school is building the capacity of staff to use data to establish individual goals with students in the core subjects and set targets for improvement.
- Teachers meet regularly to use data to identify strengths and weaknesses in content areas and adjust how they group students for instructional purposes.
- The school is using data to provide differentiated professional development to improve teaching and learning.
- The principal and assistant principals effectively observe teachers in their classrooms and provide feedback to improve instruction.
- Students, parents and staff highly trust and respect the principal and feel that the school runs smoothly.
- High expectations are effectively and clearly communicated to students and their parents.

### What the school needs to improve

- Align whole school goals, classroom goals and individual goals to better understand how they are connected and for tracking improvement in learning.
- Ensure greater consistency in the way teachers use data to set targets and measure achievement to determine progress at regular intervals.
- Review written feedback on assignments to students to ensure that parents and students understand what needs to be improved.
- Provide all teachers with opportunities to visit other classrooms to see what good teaching and learning look like when instruction is effectively differentiated.
- Develop more partnerships with outside agencies and organizations to enrich student learning.

## 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.**

Students really enjoy attending Shorackappock. This is obvious in their positive attitudes, their willingness to “always be reaching higher”, and their regular attendance. As one parent commented, “When my child is ill and has to stay home, she cries because she does not want to miss a day.” Such commitment to learning is created by the interesting lessons, the encouragement and support of caring teachers, and the fun many children have in learning new skills. Parents believe in the principal and support her leadership.

Most issues from the last quality review have been addressed while others have become part of a long term school improvement plan. The school has selected core curriculum approaches that are clearly aligned with the State standards. It has established effective systems and structures for gathering and analyzing data to better understand the learning needs of students. Interim goals are in place to measure progress in the core subjects. The school disaggregates its data to identify trends in performance and progress. For example, the data team noticed that English language learners did not perform as well on items that require certain vocabulary and as a result, there is a school-wide focus on “accountable talk” and vocabulary development. Although all stakeholders have a greater awareness of whole school goals, there is a need for more consistency in classroom goal setting and measuring student progress. Teachers are becoming more comfortable in their use of data and setting targets with students; however, a greater focus is required on planning differentiated learning. The inquiry team has made good progress in using data to identify a focus group and in planning effective interventions for the students in this group. School leaders use data strategically to make decisions in purchasing resources, scheduling, and in hiring new staff. In the short time that the principal has been at the school, a vision has been established and a positive course set for improving instruction and learning.

### 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 recognizes the importance of really getting to know how well students are achieving through gathering and analyzing data. This emphasis is clear in the way in which the school gathers assessment information from a variety of sources and rigorously examines it for patterns and trends. When the school noticed that grade 2 classes were not performing as well as they should on a language assessment (ECLAS), the coaches became involved in writing and modeling unit lesson plans to address the gaps in student learning. Similarly, the school engaged in an extensive baseline assessment in language and math for grade 3 and 4 to identify key areas for improvement accurately. Teachers

use the results of the item analysis to realign instruction in these subject areas. The data team uses a similar process for special education students and English language learners to develop action plans specific to their learning needs. The school consistently updates student achievement information and uses this data to reassess its goals and planning processes. The team has identified key skills and concepts that teachers will focus on to improve learning for children in these subgroups and meets regularly with support staff to monitor learning. This process ensures that no student falls between the cracks.

The school makes good use of comparisons to better understand the data especially with their ethnic population. The school recognized that boys are under-represented in gifted and talented classes and support staff is in the process of taking a “second look” at that population. The team also compares classes from one year to the next to identify trends in achievement and to plan ongoing professional development. They are beginning to scrutinize the science curriculum, for example, in an effort to align it with the state standards. The goal is to plan and provide training for cluster teachers in science, art, and music in order to build the staff’s capacity to integrate curriculum and improve instruction. The school clearly understands the relationship between effective teaching and effective learning. They have identified similar schools that are higher performing and are visiting these sites to continue to explore which practices make the most difference.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The school uses data effectively to set next steps in learning. Different teams engage in collaborative meetings to identify measurable outcomes for improvement and to develop plans to achieve those goals. The process will be enhanced with the administration of a central office assessment instrument (ACUITY) which provides interim data on student achievement in core areas and will position the school well in establishing interim goals to move the school forward. The school has placed a particular focus on those English language learners who have not passed the English second language test and are examining the data closely to plan effectively to raise the attainment of these students. The school uses a team approach to develop individual education plans for students receiving special services and to monitor their progress. Same-grade teachers meet regularly during common preparation times to use data for the purposes of planning units that align with student learning needs. It is during these common planning times that high expectations are communicated to reinforce the need for quality instruction that challenges students to achieve at a higher level. The school is also engaging staff in improving goal setting and feedback practices with students. In the short time the principal has been at the school, she has effectively implemented procedures and processes that enable the school to identify student learning needs in order to better align instructional practices.

The principal has an open door policy and is always looking for ways to improve communication between parents and school. She has instituted a monthly meeting, “Pastries with Parents” to gather input from the school community. Parents are aware of the general goals of the school and the focus on improving student achievement in the core areas. Students have a keen understanding that the principal, assistant principals and staff want them to aim high and to strive to be the best they can. The school is actively working with the Parent Association to reach out to more parents.

**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 is making good progress in aligning its curricular approach to State standards and exploring strategies to both enrich and deepen the learning opportunities for students. It has chosen America’s Choice as its core curricular approach to provide a balanced literacy workshop style of instruction and to effectively monitor how well students are meeting the standards. Through regular student conferencing and built in interim assessments, the staff tracks what students can and cannot do in order to plan more effectively to fill the gaps. School practices are not as consistent as they might in how it provides information to students about what needs to be improved, what targets to aim for and what next steps to take to achieve individual goals. The principal is a firm believer in “good practices lead to good results” and anticipates that the next round of assessment will help to even further clarify the focus in order to strategically plan the school’s next steps in both instructional practices and student skills.

The school continues to develop its capacity to better differentiate instruction and to embed effective practices into every subject area. It uses data to organize classes according to the learning needs of students and to facilitate planning. Grade teachers plan together to make sure students cover the same content and skills but teachers do not sufficiently take into consideration that different groups within a classroom will be working at different levels. Not all teachers consistently differentiate learning to meet the full range of student abilities and interests. As a result, students are given the same work to complete whether or not they need that kind of practice.

The school is also in the process of reviewing its science curriculum to make it more “hands-on” and engaging” and to ensure that learning is meaningful and relevant. Within the arts, programs are offered in dance, music, drama, and chess. Students enjoy these programs and want more such experiences. The principal consistently uses data to make strategic decisions about staffing, budgeting and scheduling to effectively support the achievement of the school’s goals. There is a school wide focus on “building community” and a renewed sense of mutual trust and respect among all stakeholders. The principal invites the students to a Book of the Month Read Aloud where she shares a book that focuses on a special character trait or a current genre of study. Classroom teachers use this focus throughout the month to reinforce positive behavior. There are effective procedures in place to track and monitor attendance to ensure that no student “falls between the cracks”.

**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 assistant principals are diligent in visiting classrooms on a regular basis and provide both verbal and written feedback to staff on how to improve their practices. This team engages in professional development planning based on classroom observations and the gaps that emerge from data analysis. The administrative team is also committed to providing differentiated training and carefully group staff according to need. The school has a well developed induction program and support network for new teachers. Mentors and coaches meet with new staff on a regular basis and opportunities

are provided to visit other classrooms and observe exemplary teaching practices. The school has yet to develop a schedule that provides opportunities for seasoned teachers to visit classrooms where best practices are embedded into daily routines. Same-grade teachers meet at regular times to discuss specific topics, such as “what makes an effective guided reading” lesson, and to reflect on best practices. This is one strategy, among many, that the school is using to improve teaching and learning. The principal and assistant principals collaborate and plan effectively to ensure that the school runs smoothly and that issues and concerns are addressed consistently. The focus is always on what is in the best interests of the children. To that end, the school’s emphasis on a “team approach” ensures that the child care workers respond immediately to students who are at risk and that they plan collaboratively. This approach ensures that students are “caught before they fall”. Although the school has established some connections to outside agencies to provide opportunities to support both the academic and personal growth of students, it also recognizes that more partnerships need to be developed, especially in the arts.

**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 and assistant principals demonstrate a clear vision for school improvement. The Comprehensive Education Plan identifies whole school goals that are reasonable and achievable to meet the learning needs of students and sets a positive direction for school improvement. The school is in the process of collating data from the first round of periodic assessments to establish interim goals for the first term in math as well as literacy and use that information to inform instruction to an even greater degree. The school’s professional development plan effectively addresses the importance of intervention and outlines a schedule for training that includes data analysis, differentiated instruction, critical thinking skills, and running records. Its purpose is to build the capacity of staff to achieve interim goals and to help teachers feel confident in their planning to “push students” to the next level, yet still enjoy teaching and learning.

The school recognizes that there is some inconsistency in how data is used to track student achievement and in how goals are established and monitored. For example, not all teachers discuss with students what steps they need to take to improve a particular skill or what strategies they need to hone in order to improve in the core subjects. In order to consistently implement this practice ,additional professional development will be provided to teachers to ensure that all students become effective readers, writers and problem solvers. Teachers have clearly identified the need to develop their capacity to use and understand data effectively in order to provide feedback to students that is meaningful. Staff has placed a particular emphasis for improvement on the “reteach loop” and a more effective use of rubrics for planning out next steps.

One intervention strategy that is a focus for the school is the “Critical Thinking Wheel”. It was implemented as a result of a review of last year’s performance data where the data team noted that not enough focus was being placed on “going below the surface” of text. Students struggle with inference questions and making connections with narratives at deeper levels. Many teachers are now using the wheels and are being supported through regular “walk throughs” to embed the practice of asking questions that go beyond “the facts of the story”. Because the school is collecting data at different intervals and has the capacity to make comparisons of its data using ARIS, it is in a much better position to make strategic decisions and implement interventions with some immediacy.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Shorac Kappock ( PS 098)	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>			X		
<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .</b>	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		

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .</b>	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 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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X		