



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Shuang Wen School

Public School 184

**327 Cherry Street
Manhattan
NY 10002**

Principal: Ling Ling Chou

Dates of review: November 19 – 20, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Alvin Jeffs

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Shuang Wen School is a dual language school with 573 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 7% Black, 4% Hispanic, 7% White, and 82% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 4.8% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 98.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 72% eligibility.

This school is the only bilingual Chinese school in New York State. It aims to assist students in becoming fluent in both English and Mandarin. It has grown from 42 students in 1998 to the current student population of 573. In addition, it has only been on its present site for a year, having moved from a smaller location. It has been adding grades each year and this is only its second year with grade 8 students. Two important positions, guidance counselor and special education resource teacher, are completely new to the school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is highly respected and has brought the school a long way since its inception.
- All staff demonstrate a strong commitment to high achievement for their students.
- There are clear rules, consistently applied, which contribute to the very good student behavior.
- Students feel secure and respected by all staff.
- There is a strong culture of trust and collaboration throughout the school.
- There is a broad and relevant curriculum for all students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8.
- A good professional development program has supported the development of data use and differentiation within the classroom.
- An outstanding partnership with New Visions for Public Schools has enabled the school to make good progress in using data, and classroom practices in general.
- The school welcomes parental involvement in all aspects of its life.
- The inquiry team is developing imaginative approaches to support students who experience difficulties with English vocabulary.

What the school needs to improve

- Further analyze data to monitor the progress of all groups of students.
- Continue the very good coaching and professional development to ensure that all teachers develop the widest range of differentiation skills.
- Develop action plans for all initiatives with clear targets, responsibilities and deadlines.

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.

Shuang Wen is a school that is developing well. This is largely thanks to the vision of the principal who was the principle mover in the initial proposal for a bilingual school. The administration is now much more confident in its collection and use of data to assist its strategic planning. There is still room for development, but mainly in the setting of clear and measurable targets that can be reviewed throughout the year. This applies to both strategic and classroom targets.

The curriculum is rich and well organized. Care is taken that the youngest students have appropriate opportunities for play. For students in grades 3 through 5, the work becomes more formal and more demanding so that they understand, for example, the importance of writing longer stories. By the middle school years, there is a greater emphasis on specialist subject areas and the development of self-help skills that will be essential in high school. A range of trips and activities as well as the skilled teaching of Mandarin enrich all of this.

Very good professional development opportunities arise from structured observations by senior staff. This has been particularly effective in the development of differentiation and assessment skills. Students appreciate the security of the school and the responsiveness of the staff. Parents value the fact that they can meet with the principal and staff whenever it is necessary to share concerns and look at student work.

The school is a well-managed and orderly environment where students thrive. There is a high level of trust and respect between adults and students. It has taken on new challenges each year of its existence and is becoming stronger as each year passes.

The inquiry team is focusing on the development of student vocabulary, seeking to explore ways in which technical vocabulary within different subjects can most easily be taught. This is an imaginative use of the team and senior staff are already researching techniques relating to specialized vocabulary support.

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's database is now comprehensive in its scope. It includes information from external assessments as well as classroom-based tests and quizzes. It is thorough in

comparing current performance with that of previous years. This means that the school is more aware of year-on-year progress for its students at individual and grade levels. Thus, it has a clear picture of progress within important groups such as its special education students.

The school has been prompt in responding to recommendations in the previous quality review report. As a result, it is now able to better analyze the performance and development of boys compared with that of girls, and of students who have been in the school since pre-kindergarten as well as those who receive regular support from home. It does not yet analyze data on the basis of ethnicity and this means that it has not looked carefully at the performance and progress of small ethnic subgroups within the school.

The administrative team has been rigorous in its own professional development, particularly with regard to using external data. Consequently, there are good management systems in place to collect and analyze much of the information necessary to improve student performance. A strength of the school is its work with similar schools, in particular the three other bilingual (English-Spanish) schools across New York. This has meant that procedures and professional development has improved as a result of sharing practice with other bilingual 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 proficient.

All staff collaborate well. They meet weekly in grade meetings and monthly as a faculty to discuss what is working well and what needs to be improved. In the middle school, English language arts and math staff meet as subject groups and this is providing a good forum for discussing curriculum maps and resources in a relatively new part of the school. Teachers, administrators and coaches know individual students very well and are aware of each student’s strengths and weaknesses. This, together with the additional information shared through the collaborative meetings, means that where there is a cause for concern it is identified quickly and concerted efforts to address the matter are initiated promptly. It also means that teachers are up-to-date with individual students’ development and use this information well to discuss goals with them and their parents. Both parents and students report that the teachers know individual students well, they are readily available, and offer good advice when discussing a problem or a new skill that has to be learned.

Staff are very good at conveying their high expectations to students. This is the case in both academic and personal matters. The newly appointed guidance counselor is developing a good system to assist in the early identification of emotional or behavioral difficulties. It complements the detailed classroom knowledge that teachers possess on all aspects of a student’s school life. This is particularly the case where students experience learning difficulties. The pupil personnel committee, the special education experts and the very good school-based support team work together well. They combine to implement a prompt and committed response in the form of a plan of action on issues of concern.

The inquiry team is making good progress and developing imaginative responses for students with vocabulary difficulties. Once again, the excellent trust and collaboration that permeates the school assists in the development of sensitive and relevant new techniques. The effective communication system means that developments are quickly communicated to colleagues throughout the school.

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 curriculum is rich, with a strong emphasis on the core skills of English language arts, math, social studies and science. These are supported by good budgeting. For example, up-to-date laptop carts allow for the effective use of technology. Science is also reinforced by the very good facilities. In addition, new appointments have allowed the development of popular and effective programs in art and physical education.

The major enrichment to this curriculum comes in the form of expertly taught Mandarin classes after school. The administration regards this as a high priority and seeks every way to align daytime and after-school practice to ensure the best progress in this second language. Students can take part in a number of other activities, including martial arts, stringed instruments and chess. A wide range of stimulating trips and visits add to the student experience. There are trips to Yale, Harvard and Brown Universities. In addition, a graduation trip to China took place recently. Closer to home, social studies work has been enriched by visits to museums and historic houses and trails. The school is now considering the best way to enhance this program for the middle school grades.

Teachers are increasingly differentiating their planning and classroom practices in an attempt to present appropriate challenge to students of all abilities and attitudes. Within most classrooms, teachers have developed a wide range of skills to adapt the work to individual students and groups. This is still not evident in some of the lessons and teachers recognizes that more work is necessary to ensure that all classroom differentiation is up to the highest standard. As they progress through the school, students are given greater responsibility for their own learning. Students in grades 6 through 8 recognize that the curriculum prepares them well for the demands of high school.

Teachers feel themselves accountable for student progress. The outstanding level of trust between staff means that classroom observations and discussions with colleagues continually focus the need to support students. The outstanding level of attendance, over 98%, reflects that it is a high priority for staff. It is reinforced by the very strong school-home partnership.

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 clear directions and procedures for the day-to-day running of the school are outstanding in the way that they contribute to the very good behavior and progress of students. In one particular instance a lunchtime aide escorted young children back to their classroom. The element that was exceptional was that she used the short journey as an opportunity for students to sing a song in Mandarin.

Good classroom observations by the administration and coaches provide relevant advice and support for staff. The success of this strategy can be measured by the fact that intervisitations between staff now happen on a very regular basis and are valued by teachers. As a result of the observations of teachers, and the teachers’ reflections on their

own practice, there is a strong demand for high-quality professional development. The demand has been met well. The administration and coaching staff have been very active in attending data-usage sessions and have effectively turn-keyed these back to their colleagues. In addition, staff have developed Reading Recovery and Teachers College workshop models in reading and writing. There have also been successful training programs in science, math, social studies and art.

The powerful and effective partnerships with community-based organizations are an outstanding feature of the school. These are in addition to the work with New Visions, which has been closely involved with the school since its very inception. Close links with Gouverneur Hospital provide the school with high quality health support. New York Cares provides volunteers for painting and gardening, while the partnership with the Department for the Aging provides the school with Mandarin-speaking volunteers, who also check homework within the early childhood classes. Similar partnerships with occupational therapists, speech therapists and guidance services provide day-to-day support for students as well as high-quality professional development for staff.

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

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has made good progress since its previous Quality Review. This is largely the result of the excellent leadership and vision provided by the principal. She and her senior colleagues have worked hard and effectively to improve the use of data throughout the school. They have supported this with high-quality staff development and fostered the culture of setting goals for the students. This has been effective, and although the school's success in relation to the quality standards is still proficient, there is a marked improvement on the initial review in January 2007.

The principle area for development relates to the need to set rigorous targets at all levels of the school's practice. While the setting of goals within classrooms is good, it is often 'informal'. Similarly, support for students with learning difficulties is good and focuses on exactly what each student needs. However, in both instances, the failure to set unambiguous and measurable goals means that success cannot always be measured in as rigorous way as is now necessary.

At the level of strategic planning, the cabinet is clear about the main areas for development. These include the development of boys' writing, the increased emphasis on technology and the exchange of good practice in classroom differentiation. A lot has been accomplished, which indicates that the school's systems are effective. However, the lack of clear responsibilities, rigorous deadlines and interim review dates means that developments are not always as clear or as rapid as they could be. The school is aware of this and already works closely with its board and school leadership team to develop concise and effective plans of action at all levels.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Shuang Wen School (M184)	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	