



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Walter Reed School

Elementary-Middle School 009

**58-74 57th Street
Queens
NY 11378**

Principal: Robert Wojnarowski

Dates of review: January 7-8, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Ronnie Solow

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

Overall evaluation

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Walter Reed School is a District 75 special education school with 438 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 42% Black, 31% Hispanic, 19% White, and 7% Asian and other students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 78% of the students enrolled and girls account for 22%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 81%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Students in the school receive a twelve-month educational program with related services provided according to their individual education plan. The school is situated in six buildings throughout the borough of Queens. Students travel from Far Rockaway, Queens to Pelham Bay in the Bronx for their education, and points between. The school educates students with severe emotional, behavioral, developmental disabilities, autism and multiple disabilities that affect the ability to learn. All students have intensive management needs that require extensive supports and related services.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The administrative team and staff work collaboratively and collegially to improve student outcomes.
- Parents, students and staff acknowledge the leadership, knowledge, supervisory and management skills of the administrators.
- Art, music, theater arts, dance and sports support the academic program and provide good outlets for self-expression and creativity.
- Many external partnerships and support services enhance the academic, social and emotional needs of the students.
- Classrooms exhibit current student work, class schedules, rubrics and other authentic evidence of high standards and expectations.
- Well-defined rules, regulations and procedures contribute to an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect between students and staff.
- Budget, scheduling and hiring decisions support the students' needs very well.
- The use of technology and augmentative devices support and enhance the academic program.
- Parents are well informed about all the academic, behavioral, social and communication progress of their children.
- High quality counseling and other mandated services provide students with support for academic and behavioral needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Create a uniform system for collecting and collating data to inform classroom planning and practice.
- Develop teacher skill in the use of data to match instruction with successive stages of learning.
- Disaggregate data to assess performance outcomes and progress of all ethnic groups.
- Provide additional professional development in data usage for meeting individual student needs and assessing progress towards goal attainment.

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.

In little more than a year, the principal has made a significant impact on the school. His leadership of the dedicated staff has produced a positive outcome in testing results, expansion of the arts and technology education, and the alignment of related and support services with standards-based instruction. Disaggregated data for the past three years indicate a growth in English language arts and math. Results for the 2007 academic year indicate an impressive 10.25% rise in the State English language arts examination results.

The school collects many forms of data and provides this information to the staff. They, in turn, utilize the information to plan classroom lessons. At this time, the data is in many discrete places and not organized into a coherent, user-friendly system. An organized system of data gathering and recording is needed to provide easier access to information to differentiate instruction more effectively to provide for the individual needs of the students. To address this need, additional professional development activities in gathering, collating and using data are needed. The school has worked hard to develop outreach, which are resulting in many new partnerships that greatly benefit the students. The need for many of these were highlighted through the effective monitoring of behavioral, attendance and academic data sources. The principal and his cabinet meet regularly to share and publicize information, strategize and address issues affecting the six diverse sites.

The school has addressed the recommendations from the last Quality Review effectively. Literacy skills are integrated across the curriculum, including physical education, through journal writing. Professional development in the use of data was provided, although it continues to be a need for the staff. Parental involvement at the main site is not yet at the desired level. The school is developing opportunities to increase parental involvement at the main site.

The well functioning inquiry team is examining the effectiveness of a computerized literacy program on a class of 7th grade boys. The results will be shared with the staff for further action.

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.

Teachers utilize data capably to monitor student progress. A quarterly review of student performance outcomes, built into the data analysis process and aligned with the report card periods, enables the staff to keep informed of student progress towards goal attainment. To facilitate this, the school gathers student data in many different forms across the classes. This includes standardized assessments from State examinations, the Scantron system, Read 180 and other commercial programs. Students in the alternate assessment category are assessed with the Brigance inventory system. Information from Applied Behavioral Analysis and Treatment and Education of Autistic and other Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH) provide good data. The school gathers further information from individual education plans, attendance and lateness records and the Power of Choice behavior modification program. However, staff members use many different systems for organizing this formal and informal class data as the school does not have a uniform, school-wide system for recording and accessing data. As a result, the school is not well placed to analyze data efficiently to identify progress and to meet the needs of their students. The school does not analyze its data by ethnic group but does assess progress of other sub-groups. The principal recognizes the need to incorporate this measure within the cultural sensitivity in the school.

The data specialist provides training that is building upon previous professional development and assistance in the use and application of data. This was given across sites, using high quality assessment information through technology-based programs such as Read 180. Despite this input, further training is still required to use data in matching instruction to learning.

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 Comprehensive Education Plan, along with the principal's goals and objectives, outline the benchmarks for the school year. The teachers, working with the assistant principals and coaches, establish appropriate learning goals and objectives for each student that aligns with the goals in their individual education plans. All students receive additional academic intervention services, during or after school, in individual or small group settings. Recognition of the needs of the smaller female population resulted in the formation of the Princess Club. This has evolved into a book club focusing on literature appealing to girls and supporting their literacy needs. Specific, well-planned services in English as a second language, provided through push-in and pull-out models, effectively address the needs of English language learners. Information from academic intervention services, logged onto a well-designed, individual student data sheet, indicates the daily accomplishment. The administrators and coaches review the data sheet, noting outcomes and providing targeted feedback to the teacher.

The school is effective in sharing information in a variety of ways. Monthly faculty conferences, newsletters, planning meetings, and calendars provide information and expectations to the staff. Parents regularly receive report cards, daily behavior and academic progress reports, invitations to workshops, meetings and celebrations. Notes are regularly included in the communication notebooks for students in the alternate assessment program.

High expectations are communicated to the entire school community in many ways. Handbooks for staff, students and parents, in several languages, outline expectations. Each day, the school sends home information about behavior progress. Individual education plan conferences, clinical team sessions, report card distribution, parent association meetings and open school events keep parents well informed about student progress and provide good opportunities for parents to share information with the school. Parents stated, "We can always call the AP or Mr. W and get immediate answers." "The door is always open." The school is aware that it needs to increase parental involvement in school meetings and activities at the main site and is employing many strategies to achieve this. However, the school's efforts are hampered as most students live a great distance from the school and traveling presents a hardship for the 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.

Students in the standardized assessment program follow the State guidelines for their core curriculum. Balanced literacy, using leveled libraries and the Teachers' College writing program, meets the reading and writing needs of the students. Everyday Math or Impact Math, the basis of the math instruction, provide good additional data for the teachers. Science and social studies follow the State curriculum guidelines for each grade level. High quality support, provided through several technology-driven commercial programs, enables the staff to use data-driven instructional practices to meet the needs of their students. Students engage in their learning activities with adaptive technologies and other differentiated instructional materials that address individual needs. However, the school misses opportunities to use data to inform elements of planning with differentiated instruction. Music, art, dance, theater arts, physical education and sports activities provide excellent opportunities for creativity and self-expression.

Budget, hiring and scheduling decisions are based on student need and support the classroom. Data indicated the need for an academic coach to assist teachers with literacy and math. Behavioral data highlighted the need for additional crisis intervention personnel and coaches for the alternate assessment program. These members of the staff were hired. Additional academic support was added into the extended day program in the form of a debate team, chess club, and the girls' club. Smart Boards, assistive technology devices and several computers enhance the technology program in the school.

Procedures are in place to monitor student attendance. Absence triggers an immediate telephone call from the school or visit from a family worker. An atmosphere of mutual respect pervades the school. The principal and other administrators monitor classrooms, read anecdotal records and review report cards to make sure that a positive

tone pervades all written records and interactions. Students clearly stated they feel good about school and their teachers who are always “available for help”.

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.

The administrative team uses observation and informal visits to provide feedback to teachers on observed areas of strength and need. An effective model of intervisitation pairs some teachers with those from a neighboring elementary school to observe Teachers' College writing activities. School and district coaches provide additional support for teachers. Professional development, based on need, skill, experience and interest, meets the needs of the staff in curriculum, behavior management and other professional topics. More training in the use of data is needed to assist the staff in using data more effectively to differentiate instruction for meeting student individual needs. Once a month, the staff at each site engages in a professional topic, as well as administrative items, at the faculty conference.

Many excellent support services, as mandated by the individual education plan, assist students to reach their full potential. The school is effective in using partnerships to support the students. For example, Lifeline come into the main site to provide on-site services for students and their families. Nike, the local assemblyperson and Women's Playwrights also provide some of the additional support for the students. The school runs smoothly and handles behavioral issues efficiently.

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.

There are systems in place to for monitoring the success and evaluating progress towards meeting goals outlined in the Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal's goals and objectives. Review of the school's progress is ongoing through meetings of several committees, such as the school leadership team and the literacy committee, that meet on a regular schedule to examine data, measure progress and make adaptations to existing plans.

Much of the work is led by the principal who is building staff confidence in the use of data to monitor and evaluate improvement. Each week, teams meet with the coach to review data and discuss student progress and strengths. This results in constant revision of activities and program designs and adapting goals to meet the range of student needs. At the end of the year, an overall evaluation leads to the next successive phase of planning for the coming year. Improvement plans build upon the previous achievements and recognition of weakness.

Teachers recognize that the principal and assistant principals are knowledgeable, supportive and excellent leaders with strong management and supervisory skills. They like the fact that the principal “came through the ranks, rising from paraprofessional to administrator”.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME:	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