



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Susan B. Anthony Academy

Middle School 238

**88-15 182 Street
Queens
NY 11423**

Principal: Joseph Gates

Dates of review: April 7 - 9, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Richard Woolf

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Susan B. Anthony Academy is a middle school with 1430 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 47% Black, 26% Hispanic, 1% White, and 26% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 90.9%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 67% eligibility.

The school has a barrier free designation and as such educates students with physical disabilities.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- A dynamic, charismatic and visionary principal leads and manages the school very well.
- Supporting the students in achieving the advancement of their learning is a professional and dedicated group of staff.
- Staff use data very effectively to inform their instruction.
- A first-class after-school program, attending to the students' sporting, social and academic needs, supports a highly regarded arts curriculum.
- Linking with the after-school program is an impressive array of community sponsors supporting school-wide goals.
- Very good student behavior enhances student learning.
- The vibrancy of the classrooms is conducive to student learning.
- The school provides students with excellent, and expanding, facilities to meet its own and the neighborhood's needs.
- Students enjoy the school's safe and secure atmosphere where everyone has respect for each other.
- Parents value the hard work and commitment of the entire staff in helping to raise their children's educational opportunities.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure English language learners improve their rates of progress through a better data analysis of their needs.
- Set more challenging and specific goals to raise teacher outcomes for all students but specifically the highest achievers.
- Develop a consistency of approach to differentiated instruction throughout the entire school.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Under the leadership of a strong, visionary principal, the school has very good levels of scholarship. This sustainability is attributable to a hard working staff and a body of students who appreciate the benefits of education in enhancing their life opportunities.

Staff use data very well to inform instruction. However, the school does not yet analyze English language learners or highest achieving students' data with the same rigor as other aspects of their work to improve their outcomes. Special education students make significantly more progress. An exceptional and highly valued after-school program provides over 500 students with additional opportunities in academics, sports and the arts. This is additional to the school's own first-class arts program. Classrooms are vibrant and stimulating places that play a part in engaging students in their learning. As does the students' exemplary behavior. The school has a very good program of professional development that helps teachers in their instruction and understanding of curriculum issues. Currently, the school does not fully utilize certain staff with an expertise in differentiated instruction for the benefit of everyone, thereby ensuring a level of consistency of approach. Teachers receive goals and targets but the school does not yet ensure they are both challenging and realistic.

Since the last Quality Review, the school demonstrates progress in all areas for development, particularly with gender and ethnic groups and improvements in strategic planning. The inquiry team meetings are data driven with a clear format to identify the target group. Careful monitoring of the group is underway and the early indications are positive in improving the students' outcomes.

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

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

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

The school makes very good use of its analysis of all State and Citywide data in aligning its work. Supplementing this is an array of in-house data. At the start of each year, every student undertakes a baseline assessment in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. This approach gives staff a very detailed overview of each student's capabilities and potential to improve. Every teacher uses this data to track

individual student progress to inform his or her instruction. The school has a very good system of assessing all students at five-week intervals in the major subject areas. On completion of each cycle, staff meet in departments to undertake a moderation exercise to track class and grade progress. The principal sees this as a most effective way of ensuring the administration has an overview of the school's progress.

The school uses data well to target progress of its special education students. There is clear evidence that this detailed scrutiny is helping to improve their outcomes, with a number of students achieving at the highest academic levels. However, the school does not yet apply the same rigor with its group of English language learners resulting in less individual progress when compared to other student sub-groups. The school's work in using data to understand the needs of its ethnic and gender groups is commendable. Resulting from an in-depth analysis, many initiatives are in place to show how boys in particular make strong progress when receiving instruction appropriate to their individual needs. The school is very competitive and comparisons to similar schools within their locality and across the City show progress not only to be significant but sustainable in all areas. In using technology to interrogate data, the staff receives more than adequate training. Large numbers of staff use integrated software packages for both recording data and sharing it with parents.

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

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

The principal outlines clearly both short and long-term goals. The senior leadership team works collaboratively to formulate the school goals. The principal uses all available data to place a percentage increase on improvements for each grade to achieve throughout the year. Teachers develop their own targets from the overall school goals. However, the school does not monitor these targets as rigorously as its other work to ensure they are challenging and realistic.

Special education students receive specific targets. This results in them undertaking programs more suitable for their need, with commendable results. Unfortunately, the school does not apply the same methodology to its highest attaining students or English language learners.

Overall, students are aware of their academic levels and appreciate how teachers seek to advance them through the provision of next-step learning targets. Throughout the entire building, there are examples of how the school expects students to conduct themselves and the high expectations to better academic outcomes. An excellent example is the school's "Eagle Code". The students are very proud of this and seek personally to meet its standards on a daily basis. These same high expectations carry over to parents. They appreciate the dedication of the staff in preparing their children to become lifelong learners. A strong feature is the home-school partnership and the openness of the principal toward parents. Highly valued in this regard is the ease by which parents and staff exchange information pertaining to the student's education. Parents see the school as the hub of their community with the school being the fulcrum of many new neighborhood initiatives.

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

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

The school's capacity to manipulate the curriculum to meet student need is very good. When data highlights areas requiring particular attention, adaptations take place. The changes to literacy programs in terms of reading recovery programs provide a good example. A recent initiative for teachers' professional development is the use of wider strategies to differentiate learning. As a result, most teachers differentiate instruction well to enhance their students' learning. However, there is inconsistency in the effectiveness of differentiation across all subjects and grade levels.

The school has an excellent arts program. Over three years, each student receives a menu that exposes him or her to art, music, dance and drama. Cross-curricular student work using art as the stimulus, adorn the hallways. Supporting all of this is an exceptional after-school program that attracts over 500 students every week and enhances academic, sporting, social and cultural needs. For every hour, a student spends in the program pursuing non-academic activities they have to undertake the same amount of time in academic pursuits. This proves to be a successful way of re-engaging boys in the educational process with very pleasing outcomes in their grade scores. The City acknowledges this program as being an example of good practice. The dance troupe, consisting of over 200 students performs regularly throughout America.

The principal is a highly effective resource manager. His primary aim is to improve students' self-esteem by providing additional resources that make them feel proud of their school. The results are a new high-tech auditorium and science laboratory that helps in supporting the school's many programs. Additionally an all weather track and field will replace a much used but outdated schoolyard. Students and parents took an active role in the planning of this facility, as the intention is to share it with the local neighborhood. Students respect their environment and acknowledge it as a safe haven for them to develop socially and academically. In securing this, the school has many strong and secure systems to endorse mutual respect and trust amongst the entire school community. Subsequently, there has been significant improvement in attendance rates over the last three years.

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 is highly visible in the building and staff and students appreciate this. Teachers value his guidance and the informality with which he feeds back to them resulting from his observations. Assistant principals, who lead both subject areas and one of the three academies, undertake observations that are more formal and ensure continuity across their areas of responsibility.

Using their ability to take more control of their own professional development the school opts to close early on nine separate occasions during the year. These early closures

coincide with the end of each five-week assessment period. Teams meet, calibrate work and make decisions about the most appropriate action to take in enhancing instruction. The school has structures in place for grade level teams and academies to meet regularly. Teams decide their own professional development needs. The principal also plans programs around the strategic needs of the school. The introduction of literature circles and clearly defined prompts for writing strategies are very good examples. The United Federation of Teachers (UFT) center provides a very good additional program for staff to access. Likewise, the school's involvement with a National Board Certified program sees 24 teachers undertaking an intensive program of professional development in order to gain national certification and recognition. The outcomes of these initiatives are enhancing student learning.

Induction of staff new to the school is in the capable hands of an F status teacher. Support is on going and staff appreciates this as a means of developing continuity. The school's support teams provide an invaluable service. Working in conjunction with teachers, they offer students a range of services to meet their social and academic needs. This approach is most effective in setting the school's tone, and data shows incidents of poor behavior have fallen dramatically. The positive impact of the after school program is proving equally significant. The school has an impressive list of sponsors and supporters. For example, the Haydon Foundation enhances student learning by providing them with excellent opportunities to broaden their horizons in preparation for the challenges they may encounter in future life.

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 new but effective systems in place for monitoring student progress and subsequently revising programs. These take place on a five-week cycle based on the assessments each student takes at the end of a unit of study. The initiative in English language arts in developing student writing skills is a positive way forward and data shows this. At quarterly intervals, a closer analysis of school-wide data takes place for administrators to gain a clearer overview of the effectiveness of in-house assessments and other diagnostic tests. Teacher outcomes undergo a similar process of monitoring, and adjustments to targets take place accordingly. The school does not yet monitor teacher interim outcomes with the same rigor to ensure they are challenging enough in raising instructional expectations.

When administrators observe potential deficiencies with student outcomes that affect an overall goal, they act swiftly to remedy the situation. For example, when a specific class seemingly does not perform as well as others within the same grade level, the school conducts a thorough review before setting new goals and targets. The process enables teachers at subject and grade level to air their opinions honestly and openly. The school uses data in the process to demonstrate both success and failure of the previous year's goals. The school is yet to embed monitoring systems into every aspect of its work.

The principal has an exceptionally clear vision for the school. His determination to make the school a center of excellence is evident throughout his work. The entire community subscribes to the vision and welcomes the opportunity to journey together in achieving it.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Susan B. Anthony Academy	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