



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Dr Daniel Hale Williams School for the Arts

Middle School 180

**700 Baychester Avenue
Bronx
NY 10475**

Principal: Frank Uzzo

Dates of review: November 29 - 30, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Terry Brown

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Dr Daniel Hale Williams School for the Arts is a middle school with 789 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 65.9% Black, 26.6% Hispanic, and 3.2% White students. The student body includes 3.0% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 90.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 56% eligibility.

This is a barrier free school, with 16 special needs classes and 20 general education classes. The students are divided into four small learning communities across the grades according to their interests and through an application process. These are referred to as houses according to their focus: STAR (Science, Technology and Research), Moving Image, Law and Public Service, and International. The special education students, many with physical challenges, are integrated into the “one family” environment of the school.

The school is housed in a large educational complex with shared sports facilities. It includes a high school, another middle school and two elementary schools, which serve as the primary feeder schools.

The overcrowding of previous years has been alleviated because the school no longer has grade 5 students.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- All members of the school feel safe, secure and comfortable, and motivated to contribute to their own and other's academic and personal development.
- Partnerships with outside entities generate both substantial funding for initiatives and a wide variety of enriching activities for the students.
- Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions provide teachers with all resources necessary to meet the academic goals for all their students.
- The broad curriculum, in particular the arts, engages all students and motivates them in their academic development.
- Intimate knowledge of academic and other data, results in prompt and relevant adaptations to instruction and responses to social issues.
- Teachers are provided with all necessary data to enable them to creatively differentiate instruction for all groups, especially those in greatest need of improvement.
- The successful integration of special education students with multiple needs promotes the personal development of all students.
- Professional development for all staff, including new teachers, occurs constantly through a wide range of collaborative activities.
- All staff work collaboratively to enhance the overall experience, differentiated instruction, and social support of their students.

What the school needs to improve

- Enable all staff to directly access all external and internal data about their students and to more immediately respond to their needs.
- Extend the good practice of some teachers in differentiating instruction.
- Enable teachers to incorporate technology into their instruction to further engage and challenge students

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.

The principal's vision, skilled fund raising, experience of data handling, concern for the development of special education students and for humanitarian initiatives, form a sound platform for this successful school. An assistant principal leads each house team, which includes a house assistant and dean. The teams meet weekly to analyze and monitor student data and achievement in relation to whole school, teacher and student goals. They consequently plan activities, consider differentiated instructional strategies and related professional development opportunities, and identify students in need. Experienced and skilled staff work together with eager, creative new teachers for the overall benefit of all the students in a well-ordered, calm and friendly work-focused environment. Students want to improve their performance and are very well supported in this pursuit.

An area that has been identified by the school as needing more attention include providing teachers with more direct access to all data so they can respond immediately to students' needs. While some teachers are very skilled in differentiating instruction this practice is not found consistently throughout all classrooms.

Progress has been made in all the areas of development detailed in the previous Quality Review, in particular the distribution of data-driven instructional decisions, and the promotion of classroom styles, based on student data, that require higher order engagement with tasks.

The inquiry team has established its focus and target student group. It works collaboratively to share information and discuss findings and individual student progress.. Data driven interventions, school devised assessments and the "personal touch" contribute to its development and work.

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 principal is very experienced in the use of data. He collates it from a variety of sources including Acuity, gains scores, predictive exams and school-devised

assessments carried out between external tests. He has trained the assistant principals, and filters down the data for their house, while they consider together any whole school issues or patterns elicited. It has been noted, for example, that girls and students with an interest in science and technology do better on standardized tests.

The assistant principals review their house, classroom and individual student progress at the end of each academic year in order to plan for the next. Classroom teachers are provided with a global overview of their class as well as data about their individual students. Time constraints in the calendar and the clear focus on direct involvement with students mean that insufficient formal training has been provided for them on directly accessing external data. Weekly house meetings attend to general and student specific issues. Provision of data from the administration, as well as the structure and closeness of the small learning communities ensure that all adults are aware of what their students know and are able to do, and are constantly monitoring progress.

Detailed attention is paid to the large proportion of special education students. The school makes very good use of data to identify the individual needs of every student. It also uses data to effectively monitor student progress by ethnicity, gender and first language. Teachers are ready to take even greater responsibility for accessing, collating, and using data about their individual students, groups and classes.

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 Comprehensive Education Plan is collaboratively reviewed school wide and developed annually. Overall goals are decided by the school leadership team with the administration, which comprises the house assistant and deans, the guidance counselor and staff developers, as well as the principal and his assistant principals. Specific measurable strategic objectives are outlined for the year in literacy, math, science, social studies, arts, careers, parental involvement, professional development and student support services. These relate to general initiatives that will support student progress, in addition to focused subject-based ones. They are all filtered down through the house structure to grade levels, classrooms and to all students and their parents. The inquiry team has considered a group of students with a specific need. The thorough and extensive attention to the needs of the large number of special education students is replicated with all students. This ensures a constant and detailed focus on all groups of students, as well as on those in greatest need of improvement, and their consequent continuous progress. Individual interim reports of school-devised assessments between the external ones are sent to parents to alert them to the likely performance of their children.

In order to reinforce high expectations and share whole school goals, a wide range of rewards, including celebration boards, assemblies to which parents are invited, certificates and plaques are available to those who make the most progress. To emphasize the priority of academic development, enrichment activities are open to those who are up to date with their classwork and homework. Individual detailed and specific progress reports are sent home with standardized test results. All adults in the school model and foster high expectations in every aspect of school life.

Parents are frequently contacted through surveys, telephone conversations, meetings and conferences about general school matters and their own children. The parent coordinator and her team of trained volunteer helpers, are particularly diligent and energetic in effective support of families. Information is shared in both directions to enable all adults to have a clear idea about each student's progress and performance. All members of the school community are therefore aware of the general and specific goals of the school relevant to their responsibility and of the part they play in progressing them.

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.

All classroom teachers are provided with all the data about their students, as well as suggested activities to develop specific skills. Inventories and referral forms for a wide range of areas are produced, completed and used for decision-making about academic and social matters. The academic intervention team in each house meets weekly to consider the grades on a rotating basis. Individual students causing concern are discussed in depth and interventions collaboratively agreed. These include grouping in classrooms, extended day activities and consistent responses by all staff to any personal student issues.

In addition to English language arts, math, science, social studies and the curriculum-extending focus of their house, all students attend arts lessons including art, music and dance. An exceptional range of up to 30 sports and other enrichment activities occur regularly. The combined effect of all these is a genuine application by students to continually improving their performance in academic and other pursuits.

Teachers are also provided with carefully selected resources for their classrooms, such as a 30% leveled class fiction library, as well as reading and writing kits and non-fiction books related to the curriculum maps for science and social studies. The principal's theory in providing comprehensive data and resources is to remove obstacles to promote success. Teachers therefore focus on differentiating and aligning instruction to the known needs of their students in a creative and ever developing manner, thereby clearly improving performance and progress.

The principal obtains substantial funding to enhance the support of various initiatives and to employ staff with specific roles. He fosters mutual trust, respect and responsibility, which is constantly reflected by all members of the school community. Students, staff and parents fully appreciate the "one family" inclusive environment, and enjoy coming to school. As a consequence, students want to attend school. The Comprehensive Education Plan goal for improved attendance has been achieved and maintained. Absence triggers a personal first class letter home, and tardiness is attended to by all adults involved with the student. Teachers are not micromanaged, but are given, and take responsibility, for the progress of their students. Students, in turn, are fully engaged in all their lessons, as they are set interesting tasks, which are both at their own level and challenging. Some students take responsibility for independent learning and development.

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.

School data informs the elements of the Comprehensive Education Plan related to staff development to accelerate the learning of all students. Substantial, regular and frequent professional development occurs in a focussed way at every formal and informal opportunity, thus extending the teachers' capacity to do this. New teachers are assigned a mentor, benefit greatly from these opportunities and from the intimate house structure in which teacher learning occur as a matter of course. Something happens every day to progress the teachers' ability in this respect, and consequently the students' performance. The school has clear and monitored procedures in place to enable it to run very smoothly. House assistants and deans, as well as the guidance counselor, frequently contribute informally, and regularly contribute formally, to interventions with specific students. The principal has used his skills to obtain substantial funding and links with a large number of external agencies. They provide considerable support in the school and offer substantial opportunities for humanitarian activities to benefit the local community, producing a range of social learning experiences for the students. Consequently the adults in the school are constantly developing their own and therefore the school's capacity to accelerate the learning of each student.

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 well developed.

The principal is a constant visible presence around the school and in classrooms, both in a continual monitoring capacity and to model, constructively question and observe instructional activities. In the context of the general interim goals for teacher and student outcomes he specifically focuses on whether teacher assessments are designed properly to provide accurate and relevant data and if the students are generating high quality products from their instructional activities. Assistant principals visit the four special education and five general education classrooms in their house every day, continually and effectively observing, monitoring and prioritizing interventions, with a more detailed interest in individual teacher and student goals and outcomes. As a result of their all-pervading yet unobtrusive presence and constructive professional support, teacher and student performance continues to improve. The context for these activities is the school's objectively measurable plans for improving student outcomes, which are regularly considered and revised at formal meetings, and frequently adapted or extended immediately and informally as a result of particular circumstances. Updated data from the many internal and external assessments is analyzed at least three times each year, incorporated into the revision of plans by consensus of the cabinet, and communicated to relevant staff to inform the next steps. All staff are therefore aware of and involved in the development of the long term vision and short-term goals for their students and the school.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Dr Daniel Hale Williams School	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.					
To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?				X	
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.					
To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area?					X
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?					X
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

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

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?					X
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?				X	
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?					X
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school ?					X
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?					X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X	

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

To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to make strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X	

