



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

**Quality Review Report  
Office of Accountability  
2008-2009**

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**Walter Weaver Elementary School**

**Elementary School 398**

**60 East 94<sup>th</sup> Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11212**

**Principal: Diane Danay-Caban**

**Dates of review: November 17 - 18, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Timothy Behr**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Walter Weaver School is an elementary school with 390 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 92% Black, 5% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 89.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 92% eligibility.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

The principal works tirelessly to communicate a clear vision for the future direction of the school and its development of lifelong learners prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Most teachers use Department of Education assessment data effectively to inform instruction that aligns to the mandated curriculum and the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan. In classes where teachers make good use of formative and summative data, differentiated instruction occurs, but this is not yet consistent in all classes. There is still an achievement gap for sub-groups. The school has not yet addressed the challenge of modifying its key goals and establishing systematic ways of assessing growth towards them. Progress has been made since the last review in encouraging and ensuring good behavior and good relationships between students. The staff have made successful steps in ensuring that all students are eager to be in school and want to learn.

The climate for learning is improving at the school. Students state that they feel safe, and enjoy their time at school. Parents appreciate the work of the administration and faculty and feel welcome at the school. Communication between school and home is generally good. Parents are pleased to know what goals the school has for their child. The school uses support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students.

The school attendance rate is improving and there are reliable systems in place to maintain this success. Teachers and their colleagues work hard and embrace many changes. New curriculum materials and a student behavior management system have been put in place to move the school forward. As a result student work and test scores have improved. School wide discipline has gotten better as evidenced by a reduction in student suspensions.

The principal has hired an additional assistant principal to complement her own knowledge and skills. The assistant principal uses data to continually update her knowledge of student progress and to identify specific areas of need and to align professional development goals to improve instructional practices. There is also positive use of consultants who assist teachers through concentrated professional development. Teachers collaborate in planning together and sharing good practice. The school has increased the variety of enrichment activities and lowered school incidents in an effort to have the higher-performing students remain and enroll at the school. The school continues to compare itself over time and with similar schools to refine its use of data to drive instruction to improve student outcomes.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school gathers extensive data on all students in English language arts, math and physical education, which provides a clear picture of student progress in these subjects.
- The school effectively evaluates the Department of Education accountability tools to assist in the development of the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan.
- The administration, faculty, and staff ensure that the students enjoy school and feel safe leading to improved student behavior.
- The school uses support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students.
- Teachers work collaboratively to improve instruction, monitor student growth and to learn from one another.
- The principal has a long-term vision for increased achievement in the school and a commitment to making this happen.

### What the school needs to improve

- Ensure the collection and use of data to analyze the performance and progress of students according to ethnicity and gender in all core subjects.
- Develop school-wide procedures for individual goal setting, with interim benchmarks, in all core subjects so that teachers, students, and parents can review progress throughout the year.
- Ensure that all teachers consistently use current data to plan instruction that closely matches student needs.
- Establish interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum and revise student-learning plans throughout the year.

## Part 3: Main Findings

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

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.**

#### **This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The administration and faculty use a range of data to evaluate the performance of its students, including standardized test scores, periodic assessments, and the outcomes of regular assessments made by teachers on students in their class. As a result, the school is developing a clear picture of how well students are doing, particularly in developing literacy, math and art. The data enables the principal to compare progress at grade level year to year, and to make comparisons between classes. This enables the school to identify issues in a timely manner. As a result, interventions are put in place to address academic concerns and provide more effective strategies to meet student needs.

Common preparation periods enable teachers to share, plan and to evaluate the progress of students. As a result, the school is developing an understanding of the performance and growth of individual students. However, the performance and progress of student sub-groups, including special education and Black students is in the lowest third, in all core subject areas. The school plans to develop the work of the Inquiry Team, using the Department of Education's accountability tools, to identify learning targets and work with these groups of children. The school has plans to address the analysis of English language learner data and to put interventions in place that promote good progress in this category.

Study groups, consultants, the coach and new curriculum materials help and support teachers in their classroom planning. This keeps them in line with the school curriculum, which is evolving to meet the learning needs of the students. New attendance protocols are in place and the school's monthly average is improving because of these initiatives. The school shares its expectations and goals clearly with the community regarding student performance and progress. It does this through meetings, workshops, letters and phone conversations. The school utilizes these tactics to provide information to parents and to get their viewpoints. Families are able to contact the parent coordinator regarding their child and the school and this helps to integrate parents and their children into school life. At parent-teacher conferences, parents are able to meet with their child's teacher to review and analyze their child's social and academic progress. This has improved parents' understanding of how they can help their children progress.

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

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

The school’s administration provides teachers with student data on a regular basis. This information allows school leaders and faculty to develop both long- and short-term goals focusing on instruction and student improvement. At common preparation meetings teachers coordinate strategies to meet these objectives. Although teachers are able to establish goals with interim benchmarks in English language arts, math and art, this process is not yet established in all core subject areas. The Comprehensive Educational Plan includes goals that are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound) for improvement in particular subject areas and in data analysis. The goals provide for incremental improvements in achievement. The goals align with City educational guidelines. There are no school-wide procedures for individual goal setting, with interim benchmarks in all core subjects so that teachers, students, and parents can review progress throughout the year. Parents stated that they did not know their children’s academic goals, but hope to after the parent-teacher conferences.

Conflict resolution workshops have been implemented to improve student behavior. As a result, student incident rates and suspensions have declined. Parents state that the school’s climate has changed for the better due to the commitment of the administration, faculty, and staff to make the school a safe learning environment. The school uses learning goals for the month worksheets to conference with students, to determine if academic goals are being met. This activity facilitates self-assessments to amend goals.

The school is making progress in involving parents with their children’s education. In September, at a curriculum overview barbecue, the school informed parents of what to expect academically for their children. This year, workshops for parents have added to this by providing information about assessments, resulting in conversations regarding the school’s high expectations for all students. Parents state how readily teachers accommodate them to share information about their children and identify next steps for academic and social advancement.

**Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.**

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

The school provides a broad and engaging curriculum that aligns with mandated requirements. The curriculum maps, developed by the school, enable teachers to be clear about what they should be teaching and when. The schedule is based on a well-understood “flow of the day”, which is posted in every classroom.

In the lower grades, flexible grouping enables teachers to meet the learning needs of at-risk students by enhancing programs in reading and in other core subject areas. Common preparation periods empower teachers to collaborate and plan lessons together to share best practices. Students enjoy school and are grateful for the support they receive from their teachers. The staff has embraced new approaches to the instruction they provide. This includes new curriculum materials to serve the needs of

teachers. However, there is still some way to go in developing teaching styles, such as conferencing techniques and differentiation of instruction, to challenge each student more fully. Technology is not yet used sufficiently to support student learning. The school is purchasing two personal computers for each classroom. The principal has enriched the curriculum by having Carnegie Hall and Julliard provide music instruction. These developments reflect the principal's careful allocation of resources, in terms of staff and equipment. The recent hiring of an additional assistant principal is a direct response to the identified need to address curricular and behavioral concerns. The effective matching of professional development and coaching to the school's goals and aims is having a gradual impact upon the performance and behavior of the majority of students. Using private consultants is a significant investment in the principal's strategy to address specific areas of concern. This is assisting teachers to use data more effectively to challenge all students.

The school is usually calm. Although there has been an improvement in student behavior there is a small minority of students that cause disruption at the school. The school has introduced an effective character educator program to improve student behavior and relations with the broader school community. This initiative and a student handbook which highlights expected behavior and conduct have led to a decrease in school incidents.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.**

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

The school's goal of improving the quality of learning experiences available for students directs the professional development for teachers. Some of this professional support comes through learning focus walks, with feedback highlighting clear points for improvement.

Professional development matches the changes the school has made, but it does not support the differentiation of classroom activity, and the organization of their assessment binders. Each teacher has an individual learning plan for their own development. Trends and patterns in the data and the curriculum are analyzed to make decisions about what skill set is required to improve teaching and learning. New teachers are well supported through the school's support organization's mentoring program. The depth of discussion at Inquiry Team meetings has increased their knowledge of the targeted students by interpreting data to plan structured interventions. However, the team has not shared their findings with the staff or implemented their findings to affect student learning.

Department of Education accountability tools assists teachers to identify instructional strategies that drive instruction. Sharing the data accrued will enable this process to become systemic. The school uses support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students. Good programs, such as grade equivalent diploma, sewing, and an exercise program, provide academic and personal support to families. Parents are encouraged to help in as many activities as possible. Foster grandparents volunteer to work with students and help out at special events to support the school's work of improving students' academic and social performance. The implementation of a school-wide behavior plan has improved student behavior, as evidenced by a decrease in the student suspension rate and improved student attendance.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 regularly reviews and revises plans and goals where necessary. Although formal procedures for this process are not in place, it does happen as part of an ongoing assessment and review that teachers and school leaders participate in routinely. The principal's visible leadership has been effective in developing a supportive school climate, where all students, teachers, and parents are valued and are encouraged to participate in a community of learning. Most members of staff share the principal's vision for the future development of the school. The process for change has solid foundations in data analysis and professional development. Establishing interim checkpoints, using data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, and revise student-learning plans throughout the year, enables teachers to make comparisons of student progress within and between classrooms. However, these undertakings have yet to have a major impact upon raising student achievement.

The school is reviewing its monitoring and evaluation strategies in the early grades to ensure that high achieving students will progress at a pace reflective of high levels of achievement. As a result, the school organizes its resources to plan effectively to close gaps and provide a high level of support. The principal and the leadership team evaluate the results of the Department of Education accountability tools to develop initiatives that enhance the school environment and quality of instruction. This forms part of the school's vision of continually moving towards excellence.

The school leadership team monitors progress with the school's priorities to ensure that the focus remains on improving learning for all students. The school's Comprehensive Educational Plan action goals align with the school's objective of improving student outcomes.

# School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: The Walter Weaver School</b>	△	➤	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>				
	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?		<b>X</b>		
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>				
	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?		<b>X</b>		
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

## DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYQ, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.</b>							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?			X				
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?		X					
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?		X					
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?			X				
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?			X				
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?		X					
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X				
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>