

# Quality Review Report 2009-2010

**Sheepshead Bay High School**

**High School 495**

**3000 Avenue X  
Brooklyn  
NY 11235**

**Principal: Reesa Levy**

**Dates of review: May 10 – 12, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Geri Taylor-Brown**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Sheepshead Bay High School is a high school with 2,450 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 65% Black, 16% Hispanic, 7% White, and 10% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 78%.

### Overall Evaluation

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

Students and parents of Sheepshead Bay High School “love” this place they have come to call their “second home”. Many families have a legacy of attendance in this institution, which promotes their sense of pride and loyalty. Parents express that they continue to regularly receive academic information about their child’s progress. They are well included in school decisions. This is what keeps them “coming back”!

The principal provides a “forge ahead” vision that all students can and will succeed. This is coupled with a curriculum that meets State standards, graduation requirements, and provides students with engaging classes such as theater arts, band, law, and nursing. While the curriculum is engaging, the school does not yet consistently offer instruction that is differentiated to meet the specific learning needs of all students. Teacher learning needs are also not yet being met as each teacher does not have an individualized comprehensive professional development plan. This thwarts the school’s move towards improvement and success for everyone.

While staff gathers great amounts of summative data, there is not yet sufficient examination and analysis of ongoing formative data. Nor is this information integrated into class lesson decisions. In addition, each teacher uses their own system for examining student data. These shortcomings are hampered even further by the fact that there is no solid structure and no embedded system that serve as the foundation for short- and long-range student data examination. These lackings seriously impede school growth.

However, this is a constituency that “never says die.” Students, staff, and parents are committed to ushering in a new era of growth and improvement for Sheepshead Bay High School. This is echoed in the commitment of school leaders to improvement as they strategically earmark fiscal and human resources for usage in places and programs that benefit students. One such placement is in the continuation to partner with a community-based organization to work collaboratively with staff in providing academic and personal help for students. As one student poignantly stated, “I didn’t believe in myself, they believed in me!”

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school offers a varied curriculum that includes courses that help students meet graduation requirements and classes that broaden their interests and enhance their learning experiences.
  - The school offers an array of classes, including those for career and technical education, which by offering credentials that allow students to qualify for immediate employment surpass graduation requirements. Students in the nursing assistant program speak proudly of their internships and the promise of a job upon graduation.
  - Students who are over-age and under-credited have the opportunity to enroll in a support program offering a variety of ways to recover credits. As a result, some students are graduating with their entering student cohort.
- School leaders use student data to make informed instructional and organizational decisions that support student achievement.
  - School leaders recently empowered teachers of science and math to develop and implement the new mid-year student and teacher schedules. As a result, teachers are more easily matched with classes where they use their instructional strengths to increase student achievement.
  - The school has a primary focus on literacy. As such, reading programs, text-based and computer-based, were purchased and are utilized widely. This offers students the opportunity to independently and individually hone their reading skills.
- School staff collects and examines assessment data to develop an understanding of student strengths and weaknesses and plan instruction that meets the needs of students.
  - The school examines summative data and administers an array of interim and periodic assessments to establish a general sense of areas of academic need. The school-wide focus on improving reading skills is resultant of a close examination of the English language arts data of all students.
  - A careful examination of student data identified the multiple dialects of students entering the school from other countries. Consequently, a program established by faculty members allows each student to “shadow”, for at least one week, a peer who speaks the same language or dialect, thus easing the transition into our education system. Students who are being “shadowed”, benefit by honing their translation skills and refining their reading and speaking in English.
- The principal provides a vision for school improvement by focusing all stakeholders on accelerating student learning.
  - The principal and cabinet set the school goals. However, all stakeholders clearly know the three areas of focus for the school, which are, improving literacy, improving credit accumulation and improving attendance. As a result, casual conversations sometimes include references to parts of

these goals. Students easily converse about “literacy elements” as they share and discuss school issues.

- A careful analysis of data revealed the school’s most crucial subgroup of grade 12 students who were in need of passing Regents exams, passing classes and attending class. A grade 12 team now closely monitors this data as students from grade 11 are promoted. As a result, the principal states that, “No child slips through the cracks.”
- The school has effective programs and interventions that increase student academic success through supporting their social and personal needs.
  - School staff work collaboratively with a community-based organization offering classes that help students prevent and resolve both academic and personal challenges. One student shared that a class lesson on “Bystander Intervention” helped him prepare for life situations that warranted his immediate response.
  - The school inclusion of a dean on every academic teacher team gives content area teachers the opportunity to share and exchange anecdotal information about students. This has pushed all staff to be more thoughtful as they develop individualized behavioral interventions.
- The school communicates regularly with parents keeping them informed about their child’s academic progress and encourages good attendance to help all students achieve success.
  - Parents have a loyalty to the school, which, in some cases, has spanned multiple generations. They have knowledge of school history and they are currently well informed about school situations. As a result, they are empowered to speak “for” the school. Parent familiarity with school needs moved a group of parents to recently participate in a Citywide meeting and speak on behalf of the school.
  - The school provides regular report card information to students and parents. Additionally, parents receive training in ARIS Parent Link. This tool coupled with parent newsletters, emails, and other online information, keep parents well informed about their child’s performance and the greater school.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Deepen teacher knowledge and understanding of differentiated instruction to provide teaching that consistently meets the learning needs of all students.
  - The school has a few teachers who use varied instructional strategies and activities to engage students. However, this practice is sparse. Students do not yet receive a consistent offering of instruction that is based on lessons designed to meet their learning challenges.
  - Students work alone or in groups in classrooms. However, the design of the activities and the level of teacher facilitation fall short in assuring that all students are appropriately engaged. As a result, some students perform many of the tasks while other students are much less engaged.
- Develop a common tool that enables school leaders and staff to deeply disaggregate data and analyze the impact of teaching interventions.

- The school gathers data from many sources. However, it does not use a common tool where all leaders and teachers view the same data. In turn, not all staff is able to disaggregate the same or like data in ways to glean multiple views. Thus, data is not yet sufficiently organized thus precluding effective school-wide usage.
- With the exception of science teachers, the majority of teachers have independent ways of organizing their data. This varied approach has resulted in unevenness in the depth of data analysis and usage. Thus, in some classes, students receive class work that may be too generalized and in other classes, the work may be too challenging.
- Develop a comprehensive professional development plan that is individualized to meet teacher needs and directly links improved pedagogy with student achievement and school-wide goals.
  - The school provides teachers with multiple opportunities to attend professional development events. However, these offerings are loosely and randomly connected with school goals. For example, teachers were offered a recent Saturday workshop about Bloom's Taxonomy and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. These topics are not directly linked to a school-wide plan for professional development, and as a result, teacher-learning needs are not being met.
  - The teacher teams recently began meeting and sharing student information. This practice is not yet sufficiently developed. The current emergent discussions include student behavioral information with limited references to deeper academic issues.
- Establish formal structures and a solid process for the examination and evaluation of student data including interim- and long-range benchmarks so that timely adjustments are made to accelerate student achievement.
  - The school is consistent in developing school-wide goals. However, monitoring and revising these goals based on continual data examination is lacking. Thus, consistent and steady improvement in student data is not evident across disciplines.
  - Teacher teams are meeting regularly. However, the principal admits, "Teacher teams are not formally sharing practices." As a result, teams have not yet developed a system that naturally promotes the development of benchmarks where student progress is regularly measured.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Sheepshead Bay High School	Δ	▶	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	Δ	▶	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			X	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?		X		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	Δ	▶	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?		X		
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?		X					
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?		X					
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals 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 progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		X					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>