

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Dr. Betty Shabazz

Elementary-Middle School 298

**85 Watkins Street
Brooklyn
NY 11212**

Principal: Jonathan Dill

**Dates of review: May 23 - 24, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Ainslie Cumberbatch**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Dr. Betty Shabazz School is an elementary-middle school with 484 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 77% Black, 20% Hispanic, and less than 1% Asian, White, Multi-Racial, American Indian or Alaskan Native students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 89.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Administrators make organizational decisions aligned closely to school goals to support teaching and learning. (1.3)
 - An analysis of performance-based assessments revealed that poor comprehension skills hampered student performance. The principal made an instructional adjustment by purchasing an additional intervention program, refining the support offered by the teacher center coach, acquiring classroom libraries, and emphasizing the use of non-fiction text in daily instruction. Subsequently, recent progress indicators and unit exams reveal student growth in writing, use of textual evidence, as well as phonemic awareness and fluency in grade 3.
 - The revision of teacher schedules provides increased time for literacy and math and common planning time allows teachers to meet regularly to discuss student work, share instructional practices, and gain a common language around the curriculum. This horizontal collaboration requires teachers to share responsibility for working with a group of students to improve student achievement and school tone. In addition, opportunities for vertical discussions relative to curriculum and instruction exist. As a result, the quality of student work shows improvement as noted in the review of student work folders, bulletin board displays, and classroom assessments.
- The school provides extensive feedback and support to teachers that result in increased self-evaluation and revision of instructional practice. (4.1)
 - Efforts to strengthen teacher practice are embedded in the feedback provided to staff. The principal and his administrative team use frequent classroom observations and examination of student work at team meetings to plan for improvements in instructional practice. Veteran and probationary teachers benefit from feedback and mentoring by supervisors and the teacher-center coach. As a result, teachers share that they feel supported by school leaders. One teacher reported that the recommendation she received to allow students “more thinking time before a response,” contributed to greater classroom participation and responses that were more thoughtful.
 - State assessment results and diagnostic tests revealed that teacher practice did not always result in positive student outcomes. Consequently, administrators employed a research-based rubric to provide targeted feedback to teachers and identify individual professional development needs. A school-wide focus on specific areas of need such as questioning techniques and active student engagement articulates clear expectations for staff. As a result, there is greater consistency of practice as evidenced by feedback in observation reports and noted in classroom visits, which is positively affecting student learning.

- Staff gather and analyze a range of data to monitor school level strengths and needs, student progress, plan instruction and create intervention strategies when needed. (2.1)
 - School leaders analyze a variety of data sets such as the school's attendance, discipline, promotion, and standardized performance rates to interpret overall school strengths and potential focus areas. As a result, they accumulate a wealth of information to fuel discussion, profile school needs, and guide decision-making. This information assists in setting classroom groups and shapes intervention strategies, such as the use of graphic organizers and a focus on writing across the curriculum.
 - The instructional leadership team with the aid of a data consultant organizes a stream of data inclusive of authentic student work, interim assessment data and teacher exams, as well as sub-group and grade performance to identify students' strengths and areas of need. Grade leaders share these findings around skill needs with teachers to inform classroom groups for targeted instruction. Inquiry and grade teams create tools such as graphic organizers for writing paragraphs and develop uniform language for the grade related to concepts taught that serve as viable protocols to support instruction.
- Strategic school wide goals focused on student outcomes serve as the foundation to accelerate learning. (3.1)
 - An improved school culture and current work around setting measurable goals is an outgrowth of a comprehensive needs assessment that includes staff and parent forums such as 'Breakfast with the Principal', parent workshops, inquiry work, team meetings and conversations with students. In creating current school wide goals, the administration incorporated various identified school wide needs, along with citywide expectations. This work led to a concise and public set of targets incorporated in action plans that drive organizational and instructional decision-making and that staff and parents work to support. As a result, the school community recognizes a clear vision of the school's future development, along with various supports and resources and assists in meeting set targets.
- Teachers welcome opportunities to participate in collaborative inquiry and use this work to strengthen instruction and raise learning outcomes. (4.2)
 - Common planning time allows all teachers to work on grade and inquiry teams to support and monitor student progress while deepening their knowledge of practice through collaboration with colleagues. During a team meeting, teachers worked to refine the language in a rubric to match State expectations and reflect greater clarity based on student work for a given assignment. As a result, teachers remark, "The team structure is helpful...we share practices."
 - The principal assigns grade leaders as conduits to teams and empowers them through professional development. They organize team meetings, provide feedback between administration and staff on key issues, turnkey professional development and focus discussions around teacher practice and student progress. As such, these significant leadership roles build school level capacity and encourage staff buy-in of initiatives.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the alignment between academic tasks, curricula and State standards to ensure that all students make progress in their learning. (1.1)
 - Units of study and curriculum maps that align to the Common Core Learning Standards exist in the humanities, math and science. However, activities that promote higher order thinking are not always exhibited in daily instruction and therefore not all students participate in rigorous learning opportunities. As a result, lessons across the school do not consistently challenge higher performing students or match the needs of a variety of learners.
 - Once a week during the school day and after-school, a team of teachers develops units of study and curriculum maps that align to the Common Core Standards with academic tasks designed to engage a variety of learners. An action plan template was developed to support teacher instructional practice. However, not all teachers have begun to use student work and periodic assessments to inform refinement of unit and learning tasks to ensure positive learning opportunities for students.
- Deepen differentiation of instruction based on data so that all lessons provide appropriate challenge and maximize student learning. (1.2)
 - Teachers provide differentiated instruction using a variety of intervention strategies based on student performance. In a first grade class in English language arts, students recorded information on the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire for small group discussion and large group share out using chart paper, or other methods. In a fourth grade math class solving problems that required changing percents to fractions, students were grouped by skill level and tasks varied according to groups. However, the level of differentiation varies across the school with all students in some classes receiving the same instruction and material regardless of need. As a result, not every student has their needs met.
 - All teachers work on grade and inquiry teams to analyze data, develop strategies, and monitor student progress. However, across all classrooms the teamwork has not yet led to high levels of engagement and rigor by students, as well as critical academic and personal behaviors necessary for college and career readiness. Therefore, student performance, as noted in periodic assessments, is inconsistent across the school.
- Revise the process of data analysis to establish a systematic and disaggregated review of student performance to further support targeted instruction. (2.2)
 - Teachers reflect at specific intervals on various data streams from periodic and classroom assessments. However, analysis of student progress across subgroups is not always evenly investigated. As a result, the impact of interventions for specific groups of students such as holdovers and those in temporary housing are not always identified as quickly, nor coupled with immediate adjustments to curricula and teaching practices to support the learning of all students.

- The use of rubrics and tools for peer and self-assessments during lessons, as well as other ways for teachers to determine student understanding, are inconsistent across classrooms. Some classrooms show evidence of mini-assessments in the form of differentiated questions posed to specific students to gauge understanding, while others only involve surface level questions that require a simple procedural response. For example, “How do we do that?” and “Why divide by 2?” or a request for the listing of facts from a given source were noted. Therefore, the inconsistent use of thoughtful assessment practices and students’ showing understanding via responses to questions, hampers teachers’ ability to make immediate instructional adjustments as necessary.
- Build on the supports and collaboration with families and community-based organizations to ensure a consistently safe and orderly building resulting in increased outcomes for children. (1.4)
 - An environment that denotes respect is emerging at the school. The principal responded to feedback given through the Learning Environment Survey where parents, teachers, and students indicate a lack of safety and order. The principal worked collaboratively with all school groups to develop a behavior values system, called Citizenship, Pride & Respect (CPR) to positively influence student behavior. However, this transformation is a work in progress as parents and students still cite incidents of fighting and bullying at the school as an area of concern.
 - The principal actively recruits additional youth development and guidance support for students while providing them with ongoing access to the school’s guidance counselors. However, student attendance still lags behind other schools in the district and adult–student relationships, although growing, has not yet influenced significantly student academic success or served to reinforce positive choices and self-regulation.
- Promote greater stability in the use of classroom-level data to differentiate goal setting so that all lessons are rigorous and engage groups of students at their level. (3.2)
 - Teachers consistently review student work and the results of benchmark assessments to identify expectations for groups of students. However, not every teacher uses this data effectively to establish individual learning goals for students or suitable targets for on-going improvement reflective of student annual and short-term goals. As a result, students’ progress and achievements vary across the school.
 - Teachers analyze data from item skills analysis and develop tools such as graphic organizers and writing prompts to support students. However, within each class there is not yet a refined focus on goal setting so conversations between teachers and students often lead to learning goals such as, “To get a 3 or 4 on State exams” which does not accelerate students to reach their full potential nor to suitably recognize what is needed.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Dr. Betty Shabazz School	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score		X		
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			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		
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.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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 Align assessments to curriculum, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?			X	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?		X		
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.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?		X		

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.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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, guidance/advisement support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?		X		

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.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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, with particular attention to the CCLS?		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		

Quality Review Scoring Key

UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed
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