

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Dr. Betty Shabazz School**

**Elementary-Middle School K298**

**85 Watkins Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11212**

**Principal: Jonathan Dill**

**Dates of review: May 21 – 22, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Ainslie Cumberbatch**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

The Dr. Betty Shabazz School is an elementary-middle school with 376 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 74% Black, 22% Hispanic and less than 3% other students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 88.0%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School culture is evolving into a learning community that centers on the different needs of students to support their academic and social emotional development. (1.4)
  - With the adoption of the school wide behavior intervention model, Citizenship, Pride & Respect (CPR) and professional development for staff on teacher effectiveness and classroom atmosphere, provided by a consultant, the school environment is transitioning into a safe zone where student and adult learning is emerging. Discipline is more structured with consequences in place, fostering student responsibility for their choices. The school has branded its CPR initiative, which permeates the school and uses the model as a reminder to students in the hallway, classroom and common areas about acceptable school behavior. Parents reinforce that their children take pride in their CPR Passport and are independently making better choices since the school has clarified the consequences. Students are afforded additional learning opportunities through after-school programs and academic supports that are increasing their learning, supporting character development, and increasing this year's attendance rate from 88% last school year to 89.21% year to date. Over the past year, parents have noticed a shift in their children's desire to attend school that they have become more involved in their learning, and look forward to coming to school.
- The school communicates high expectations for academic and personal growth to staff and families while developing supports to help them attain success, so that there is mutual accountability for student growth. (3.4)
  - The Danielson Teaching Framework informs professional development needs for teachers that supports building high instructional expectations for teacher performance. Professional development on the use of the Danielson rubric is conducted regularly throughout the school year, in order to consistently build teacher capacity. These trainings are offered during faculty conferences and grade meetings based on emergent needs. In addition, instructional leads provide support to colleagues on the school's common teaching framework and other topics, such as differentiated teaching strategies, that impact instruction by using their classroom as a lab site. Network staff also provides continuous opportunities to teachers for professional development to sustain practices aligned with expectations. Targeted support and consistent communication to staff around instructional expectations, reflected in observation reports, teacher growth plans and professional development plans, result in buy-in and support for increased student outcomes, as noted in conversations at team meetings.
  - Twice a month the school schedules time for parent meetings framed as "Families as Learning Partners". Topics for these meetings include ARIS, the Common Core Learning Standards, the school's behavior management system and strategies to help them understand their child's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Every third Thursday of the month, parents meet with the principal for breakfast to engage in conversations about academic

expectations, assessments, school events and a school performance check-in. Similarly, every fourth Friday of the month, parents go into classes to observe first hand the progress of their students and to develop a familiarity with the school curricula. Support for family needs are also provided by the school's Parent Coordinator and 21<sup>st</sup> century program that provides counseling and social services. Parents report that their voice is a welcomed part of the school community and applaud the school's response to their request for more information about the Common Core Learning Standards. The school issues a monthly newsletter and elicits feedback based on the information shared through daily encounters with parents and the twice-monthly meetings. In addition, the school provides feedback to parents on student performance by issuing progress reports and report cards three times a year to establish on-going communication between families and teachers. Parents report that this communication is a further resource for them to stay informed about their child's progress. This consistent approach to build a family of learners has resulted in a more meaningful school – home partnership that positions parents to keep their children on a path towards college and career readiness.

- School leaders use a research-based rubric as a formative assessment tool with a clear focus on deepening adult learning in order to improve instructional practices. (4.1)
  - School leaders conduct classroom observations and meet with teachers to discuss their performance. The administration prioritizes visiting classrooms daily and engaging teachers in formative and formal classroom observations, which are aligned to the Danielson Teaching Framework. Ongoing oral and memorialized feedback informs teachers of the quality of their work with next steps for improvements and their impact on student performance. Currently the school is emphasizing higher-order questioning, collaborative discussion techniques, designing coherent instruction aligned to students' identified needs and using assessment to group students during instruction. Thus, classroom feedback mirrors these foci. Consequently, administrators are able to efficiently identify pedagogical trends throughout the school and plan for staff development based on identified teacher needs. The daily short observations to teachers through snapshots supports the staff in improving the delivery of instruction as evidenced in feedback on observation reports that reflect their progress in the implementation of a coherent curriculum and thoughtful grouping of students based on student work.

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

- Expand the instructional coherence across subject areas and grades through standards aligned curricula to deepen cognitive engagement and accelerate academic achievement for all learners. (1.1)
  - School created curriculum maps that align to State standards exist for each grade and subject area. These maps outline skill and content area development for all grade levels and set forth learning targets, embedded final tasks and incorporate identified instructional shifts. However, the curricula used by the school does not consistently articulate curriculum accessibility and scaffolds for all students, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs). The school's work

on integrating the Common Core expectations into units of study and infusing the citywide instructional shifts that require emphasis on grounding reading, writing and discussion in evidence from the text into their planning is inconsistent across the school. There are varying levels of rigor evident in unit and lesson plans. Tasks range from preparation for debates and defense of arguments using information from texts about child labor laws, to the simple retelling of facts relative to a study of various communities. These practices lead to uneven opportunities for students to engage in activities that are cognitively challenging and promote higher order thinking.

- Refine teaching practices and curricula to ensure consistent alignment with beliefs of how students learn best, so that lessons challenge and engage all students at their entry levels and result in improved learning outcomes. (1.2)
  - The school believes that students learn best when differentiation is driven by the ongoing use of formative and summative assessments. As a result, students are grouped by ability or by specific skills needed. However, while group work is targeted and questioning in most classrooms leads to some critical thinking and student participation in discussions, students' written work products do not consistently evidence high levels of student thinking. For example, in a special education bridge English language arts (ELA) classroom, all students were engaged in the same activity, regardless of their abilities, learning style or identified designation. The teacher did not demonstrate the use of leveled supports for various learners, thus lacking a strong understanding of how to tailor instruction to engage and appropriately challenge a variety of learners, including ELLs and SWDs, thereby limiting the prospect for them to complete more rigorous learning tasks that demonstrate higher levels of thinking. Consequently, not all students are exposed to teaching strategies and academic tasks, at their instructional levels, that consistently challenge their thinking hindering their ability to produce high-level work products.
- Ensure that teacher assessment practices reflect the use of on-going checks and analysis of information on student learning so that adjustments to instructional practice are timely and increase mastery. (2.2)
  - Most teachers make effective use of on-going checks, like, circulating from group to group listening and asking questions, as well as calling on various students to respond to questions and identify evidence in the text. Some teachers ask questions such as, "Does anyone disagree with that answer?" which help teachers to make on the spot instructional adjustments. However, in a few classes these strategies were not utilized. As a result, some students do not benefit from a teachable moment whereby information is presented in various ways making it more easily understood. Additionally, in some classes common benchmark assessments that track student progress on content specific literacy skills are administered on an infrequent basis, which impedes the teacher's ability to address areas of concern, and limits their ability to remediate deficiencies. While teachers utilize periodic assessments to identify class strengths and areas of concerns to make curriculum and instructional adjustments, some do not examine the data by grade and special population, thus limiting the number of students in all subgroups who can reach proficiency.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Dr. Betty Shabazz School	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		X					
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?		X					
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?		X					
<b>School Culture</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			X				
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?		X					
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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 <b>inquiry approach</b> that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?		X					
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>