



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Willoughby School

Middle School 162

**1390 Willoughby Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11237**

Principal: Barbara DeMartino

Dates of review: May 21 - 22, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Willoughby School is a middle school with 731 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 6.6% Black, 87.9% Hispanic, 1.1% White, and 4.3% Asian students. The student body includes 22.1% English language learners and 13.6% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 91.2%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 98% eligibility.

The school is housed in a 100 year old building which was originally used for elementary school students.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and the administrative team have an in-depth understanding of the needs of the school and a clear vision for its future.
- The entire school community supports the vision of the principal and is focused on improved student achievement.
- Mutual respect between students, teachers, the administration and parents permeates all aspects of school life.
- Data is collected from a wide range of sources and used effectively to assess student, class, grade, department and school-wide needs.
- Technology is an integral part of instruction throughout the building on a daily basis.
- Students are provided with an extensive array of in school and after school enrichment activities that target the arts, sports and project based learning.
- Professional development, differentiated by need and inclusive of all constituencies, is an intrinsic part of school culture.
- The allocation of resources is data driven and well aligned with school-wide goals.
- Parents see the school as a means to improve the lives of their children and support the high expectations of the administration and the teachers.
- Extensive protocols are in place to ensure that a positive learning environment, consistent attendance and an orderly tone are maintained.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that data is used to set measurable long and short-term goals for all students, which are evaluated at specified intervals throughout the year.
- Ensure that all students and parents are aware of the levels of achievement needed to reach long and short-term goals.
- Consistently utilize skills analysis data to deepen and refine differentiation of instruction for all students.
- Support teachers in developing a broad range of modalities to ensure that learning is interesting and compelling for target populations.

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 proficient.

The Willoughby School reflects the positive and intense focus of the relatively new administrative team that is completing its third year in the school. The principal and four assistant principals have developed a standard of high expectations and school-wide goals which target improved student achievement. The use of data is the impetus that drives the school and determines resource allocation. The school utilizes the Teachers College balanced literacy model for all students. This model has been expanded to include special education students and English language learners so as to support the individual growth of all students. Math is addressed through the Macmillan mathematics program on all grade levels. Data from New York State summative assessments as well as periodic assessments and in-house formative measures reflects improved student outcomes and longitudinal growth. Professional development on the use of data, a recommendation for improvement in last year's review, has been extensively addressed. The school's inquiry team has targeted grade 7 students with a focus on the English language learner and special needs populations as the data indicates this is an area of concern for the school. Interim assessments and the tracking of student progress of this target population have shown that the enhancement of vocabulary and language usage produces significant reading skills improvement. Analysis of data has led the school to expand this area of instruction school wide. While the school has consistently developed and shared data-driven, school-wide goals, interim goal setting, and the steps needed to reach interim goals, is an area for improvement. The school is also focusing on more motivating curriculum opportunities for targeted students.

The commitment to improvement and the high expectations of the administration have reached all constituents of the school community. Their vision is shared by all stakeholders and partnerships have been established throughout the community, which bring enrichment opportunities for high-achieving students and address the gender needs reflected in last year's review. This is has created a growing culture of equity and collaboration which is reflected in school morale and in the mutual respect that permeates all aspects of school life.

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 school has consistent structures in place to collect and monitor student data from a wide range of sources. Running records, teacher conference notes, periodic assessment data, as well as summative data from State assessments and unit tests in the Macmillan math program are collected in teacher assessment notebooks. English language learners, who make up almost one quarter of the school population, are also evaluated through school-wide protocols as well as with summative data from the NYSESLAT examination, and serviced through in-school and after-school support programs that address their targeted needs. Special education students participate in all diagnostic assessments with modifications as determined by their individual education plans. These binders are reviewed by each of the five administrators on an ongoing rotational basis throughout the year, in one-to-one departmental teacher conferences. This data-driven focus has led the school to target upper grade boys as an area of need and to address the specific needs of all students. The school uses school-wide data from periodic assessments and New York State summative assessments to reflect on longitudinal student progress, by class, grade and subject area, evaluating trends and focusing on areas of need. By carefully disaggregating this data, the administration and faculty are able to successfully identify and concentrate on gender and ethnic-specific instructional priorities, and improve student achievement.

Differentiated professional development in the use of data has enhanced teacher capacity as well. Comparisons with similar and peer schools are a regular part of the school's data reflections, and partnerships with several local schools have been established, so that innovative strategies can be shared. This clear and intensive focus on data collection, analysis and application has enabled the school to effectively measure and support continuous growth in student achievement.

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.

School-wide goals and the principal's vision for improved student achievement are clearly defined and shared with all members of the school community in a consistent and reflective manner. Goals, such as augmented academic vocabulary to enhance comprehension and increased parental involvement, reflect data-driven school needs. Faculty conferences, grade conferences, instructional team, department and academy meetings enable the administration to collaboratively determine and share yearly goals, which are discussed and then shared in writing. Class, grade department and academy goals are also addressed in this manner. Administrative observations further reflect the commitment to these goals and ensure that they are the focus of classroom instruction. The inquiry team meets regularly to determine and monitor the goals for target population students and to develop school-wide processes to reach these goals, as well. These targeted priorities are shared with parents during parent meetings and workshops, reflecting the high expectations that the school consistently promotes for all students. Parents are welcomed in the school and feel comfortable talking to teachers about the needs of their children.

By evaluating the teacher assessment notebooks on an ongoing basis, the principal and the assistant principals are able to reflect on grade, department, academy and class and student goals with teachers and to monitor progress towards those goals. While

individual educational program goals for special needs students are shared with parents and students, student awareness of personal goals is inconsistent among the general education population. Teacher progress reports are shared with parents for some, but not all students. The school is working towards this end and protocols are being put in place to ensure greater consistency in this area.

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.

The school consistently aligns its curriculum, strategic decisions and resources with targeted school-wide goals. The universal implementation of the Teachers College balanced literacy methodology, with intensive ongoing professional development for all English language arts and content teachers reflects this commitment to improving student achievement. Several new programs also address this goal. Flowcabulary, a highly motivating, music-driven vocabulary enhancement program, was implemented in alignment with the goal of increased academic vocabulary. Technology is evident in all classrooms on a daily basis, with universal use of SMARTboards and extensive use of laptops, to improve student research skills and language usage as well. The arts and other enrichment opportunities are amply reflected in the work of a licensed arts teacher and partnerships which provide the students with band, ballroom dance, martial arts, and a variety of fitness programs. While differentiation is provided in most classrooms, it is not consistently aligned with individual student goals, nor has it been consistently implemented throughout the school. The school is also working at providing more motivating and compelling instruction for targeted population students. Materials have been purchased to address expressed gender and English language learner interest and will be incorporated into the curriculum in the coming school year.

Budgeting decisions target enhanced teacher capacity and improved student achievement. The number of out-of-classroom positions was cut to ensure that students received more in-class support and prioritize small class size. Teacher accountability is addressed through daily administrative classroom snapshot observations which monitor instruction throughout the building. Universal protocols have significantly decreased student absenteeism, and a partnership with a local community organization provides the school with full-time attendance outreach personnel. The tone of mutual respect that permeates the building is exemplary. All members of the school community see the school as a collaborative, safe, and caring environment that promotes student success.

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.

Collaborative professional development is a true priority of The Willoughby School. Ongoing observations by the administrative staff, both formal and informal, enable the school to target the range of needs of teachers in reaching school-wide goals. The school’s English language arts focus, as determined by the analysis of summative and

periodic assessment data caused the school to adopt the Teachers College balanced literacy approach and to provide training and ongoing support for all teachers. Data analysis, an area for improvement in last year's review was amply addressed through the work of an F-status teacher who supported staff in the use of data and the periodic assessments, individually and in small groups. Inter-visitations are regularly scheduled and enable teachers to share innovative approaches across grades and across departments. Faculty meetings highlight teacher successes and provide a forum for teachers to share their work with colleagues. Teachers are consistently encouraged to attend Citywide professional development and then turnkey to fellow staff members. New teachers regularly and consistently receive support from mentors, grade level colleagues, the administration, coaches and learning organizations and partnerships. Partnerships provide a wide range of student enrichments both in the arts and by providing opportunities for trips and experiential learning projects.

Protocols are consistently in place which address discipline issues and ensure effective student learning can take place. A positive reinforcement behavioral support system is being implemented throughout the school. The system promotes positive, responsible behavior and provides tangible rewards to students. All areas of student need are addressed. Based on student data, and the needs of the community three guidance counselors were hired, a new medical partnership has been established and weekly advisory periods have been implemented.

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 proficient

Consistent monitoring and revision of student goals is an area of transition for the school. Based on an analysis of the student outcomes for this year, goals for next year have already been generated and instructional plans made for the 2008-2009 school year. School-wide, grade, department and academy goals are regularly evaluated, revised and used to inform instructional decisions several times throughout the year. Teachers meet with the principal on an ongoing basis and reflect on the data for each student and each class, utilizing the teacher assessment notebooks. Periodic assessments, newly implemented this year Citywide, are also a key measure of student and teacher outcomes at interim intervals. These measurable student assessments aligned with targeted goals and analyzed and reviewed at specific times throughout the year, are now a key factor in the school's student goal-setting protocols. The inquiry team utilizes the data from these and other formative assessments to reflect on target population student achievement in a consistent manner and to address needs accordingly. Students in this population are informed of their goals and track their progress towards those goals. Student participants in the Read 180 program also utilize interim assessments and goals to reflect on their achievement, while special needs students also measure their progress in reaching their individual educational plan goals.

This process, coupled, with an understanding of the clearly defined steps needed to reach an interim goal is rapidly becoming a strong component of the school culture for all students. It is this powerful vision of improved student achievement through the use of data-driven instruction that the principal and her strong, dedicated administrative team are implementing in the school and sharing with all constituents.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Willoughby 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 rigorous, 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 and tardiness?				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, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				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 makes 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

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped