



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Bergen School

Public School 1

**309 47 Street
Brooklyn
NY 11220**

Principal: Zaida Vega

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Reviewer: Alan Geller

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 1, The Bergen School, serves 963 students in grades pre-kindergarten to grade 5. The ethnic make-up is comprised of 92% Hispanic, 3% Black, 3% Asian and 2% White. The Hispanic population comes mainly from South and Central America. There are 320 English language learners, almost one-third of the total enrolment. These students receive service in self-contained English as a second language classes, dual language classes and in general education classes, where they receive either pull-out or push-in English as a second language instruction. There are 62 special education students, 6%, who are serviced in collaborative team teaching and self-contained classes.

The attendance rate is 94% which is on an upward trend and is above similar schools. The school receives Title I funding. A modern, very well resourced library serves as a media center; a lending library and place students can read.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a focused leader who has established a safe and positive learning environment for all students.
- The school uses a variety of data to track student progress.
- School-wide committees, such as the pupil personnel team, work collaboratively to ensure a quality educational program.
- The school provides a variety of classroom instructional approaches and intervention activities to promote the progress of English language learners.
- Differentiated instruction, based upon the learning styles and the individual needs of students, engages their interest and promotes good achievement.
- Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are aligned and are determined by an analysis of the data.
- Teachers and students share a mutual respect which enhances the learning environment and promotes engaged classes.
- Parents feel they are a well-respected part of the school community and participate in decision-making activities.
- School routines are well established and as a result the school runs smoothly.
- Student attendance is good, due to a safe and nurturing environment and an enjoyable instructional program.

What the school needs to improve

- Widen the analysis of the performance of groups of students to include ethnicity as well as other groups represented in the school.
- Further develop the tracking of student progress, at each grade level, to include benchmarks for the mastery of skills.
- Further develop the use of rubrics as a means of evaluating student work and setting a standard form of recording benchmarks.
- Increase the range of relationships with community-based organizations to support students who are in the greatest need of additional academic services.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with some well-developed features.

The principal is a focused leader who works collaboratively with her cabinet to support teachers with professional development that greatly enhances students' achievements. A collaborative effort is exhibited at all team meetings displaying the commitment to raise achievement levels. Teachers use a good variety of assessment tools to track student progress. Data is regularly scrutinized and discussed at meetings to determine the effectiveness of programs and to plan the next steps. The principal closely involves the staff in decision-making activities as a means of supporting good instructional strategies. Teachers meet often to analyze results, taking ownership for student learning. As a result, there is a positive learning environment where students are fully engaged in their lessons, and the quality of learning is good. The staff and students show a mutual respect which supports the positive school tone. Well-established and understood routines are in place and the school runs smoothly. Parents support the principal and are encouraged to participate in the work of the school and the progress of their children. They are a valued part of the school community.

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 student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school gathers data from standardized tests as well as from a variety of tracking tools in reading, writing and mathematics. There is a very good system for informing the principal that allows her to readily track the whole school, grades and class progress. Instructors establish useful class profile sheets which details the needs of students and the intervention activities that are prescribed. This information is shared and discussed with members of the cabinet so that they can make informed decisions to improve programs to support effective instruction

Teachers keep good profiles of each student to enable accurate tracking of progress in reading, writing, and mathematics. This includes data on running records and conferencing notes. They use this information to develop appropriate goals for the class as well as plan differentiated work for individual students. Teacher tracking records do not contain benchmarks noting the levels of mastery that are achieved in each grade and class. The principal is aware that this is a next step.

The data is collaboratively analyzed to determine the needs of English language learners and special education students. The school has developed a good variety of classroom approaches and intervention strategies that is serving these students very well.

The principal reviews school scores with similar schools as another measure of progress. She and her team compare the data within the school and the past performance of

students to determine trends within grades and classes, while also noting the training needs of the staff, although the relative performance of ethnic groups receives less focus.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The principal and the cabinet regularly meet to review the school data to determine goals and timelines. Teachers participate in these meetings when they relate to their specific subject area. Grade and faculty meetings are used well to find solutions to problems and to establish the full implementation of the curriculum. Instructional coaches support teachers by assisting them in setting realistic classroom targets, developing ways to use the data and providing them with classroom teaching strategies that have proven to be successful.

The tracking tools used in all classrooms allow teachers to set goals and to check that goals are reached. The goals are based upon each student and each classroom on a grade. Teachers on each grade level review the strengths and weaknesses of their students and plan their lessons based on these findings. There is a collaborative effort of the teachers, school leaders, intervention teachers and support staff to develop excellent programs for students. Good data analysis is used in the grouping of students according to performance level and is used well to advance students by providing them with the appropriate materials that will raise their level of achievement. In addition to receiving small group instruction within the classroom, students who have the greatest need receive additional small group or individual assistance from intervention staff in a pull-out mode of instruction. Before- and after-school programs provide additional support programs for all students especially targeted students who scored in levels 1 and 2 on the State exams.

The principal and her cabinet set challenging and high expectations for the students. This is conveyed to the entire school community and supported by the teaching staff. Parents receive information concerning school plans and practices and are able to share their knowledge of their children’s needs with the school. This information is of help to teachers in setting goals and making plans. Parents are invited to school on a monthly basis to visit classes to observe practices and share information which supports the final planning process. Parents feel that the school fully supports their children. Students acknowledge the high standards and work hard to succeed. All teachers are involved in providing support to students.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The school seeks to improve the quality of the curriculum by carefully analyzing its strengths and weaknesses. It has adopted the Teachers’ College curriculum which has sufficient built-in opportunities to monitor progress. Consultants from the college support the teachers to guarantee the effectiveness of the program. Similarly, programs which have embedded assessment materials have been selected to support the needs of special

education students. The mathematics program has its own assessment plan which has been successfully modified by the school staff to fully align them with State examinations.

Classroom teachers and intervention providers keep their own data, and articulate this information to gain a shared understanding of each student's needs and learning style. Class groupings are initially developed by looking at the data. Class data is developed and used well to create good information to aid teachers in planning appropriate lessons for their students whatever their needs. This information helps them form flexible groupings of students with like needs in reading, writing and mathematics.

Good budgeting, staff placements and scheduling fully support the needs of all students. The push-in and pull-out model is used to provide small group intensive instruction for students in greatest need. Talent programs such as art and dance are provided to develop the interests of students. The skills of teachers and of the supervisory staff are supported by outside consultants. Common planning time has been provided to allow for meetings and professional development activities, which is well used by the teachers and the instructional team to improve teaching competencies.

The instructional programs use the workshop model, which allows a level of responsibility and freedom for students to work in small groups and individually. Students learn to select their own books based upon the knowledge they have of their reading levels. Students are active participants and enjoy learning. Teachers and students share a mutual respect. Students appreciate their teachers and seek to live up to their high expectations. Attendance is 94% which is an improvement over prior years. The school is attentive to absent students and works with the home to maximize good attendance. Students enjoy the safe and nurturing environment and are supported in this feeling by their parents. The school motivates students to want to participate in school activities. They receive awards for their positive efforts, which they appreciate and therefore continue to work hard.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient with some well developed features.

Establishing a dedicated and caring staff is a priority of the principal. Teachers are expected to have a wide knowledge of early childhood education and a willingness to work collaboratively as a part of a team. They must also have a portfolio of positive past practices.

The needs of students and teachers are considered when making professional development decisions. As assessments are reviewed, trends become evident which determines one portion of the professional development plan. For example, the staff noted signs of particular weakness in the area of phonemic awareness, which became an area for concern. A plan was developed to include a word study program in which resources and training were coordinated. Training may be for the entire faculty, a grade or an individual teacher. Teachers are trained to interpret data such as analyzing test results and developing item analysis to determine skill needs and next steps. Teachers are also involved in attending out of school training, with turnkey training for the staff after each visit.

In-school activities add to professional development. For example, assessment sessions to analyze student writing samples have started. Rubrics are used to grade student work

to further improve feedback to students so they know what they have to do to improve their work. The principal conducts walkthroughs and visits classrooms for a specific purpose. Assistant principals visit regularly and offer suggestions to improve teaching skills. Teachers observe each other on their own or with the support of a coach or an assistant principal. The principal reflects on school practices with her cabinet, and staff have opportunities for self- and peer-evaluation in surveys and the teacher leader program.

The assistant principals, the coaches and principal meet to evaluate plans. Grade meetings with school leaders are also held to evaluate results. Determinations have been made to improve teaching strategies concerning student writing, writing in the content areas and how to develop guided reading. Strategies are analyzed and changes in style are made to improve instructional outcomes.

The principal is seen as the focal point in creating change in the building. She is reflective of her plans and she models this for her staff. Parents, students and staff feel that the school is a safe place and that procedures are well established. A community-based organization partners effectively with the school to provide mental health activities but does not provide academic support for students.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient with some well developed features.

The principal and the cabinet establish in the beginning of the year planning sessions to review assessments, the school curriculum and to establish goals. Meetings with teachers are conducted to focus on the steps to attain school goals. Professional development is aligned to the goals set.

The school also compares classes to assess whether or not the reading levels of students ascertained from the data is accurate and which classes have achieved more. Classroom visits to speak with students to gather feedback allows the school leaders another way to monitor progress. Teachers use data to make judgments about their teaching strategies and ways to group for instruction. Princeton Results are compared within each grade to note student progress and follow-up activities, and are used to plan lessons. Teachers look at grids of student scores and create their own item analysis as a means of determining the quality of instruction and how they will improve student outcomes. The pupil personnel team regularly reviews individual needs, and creates intervention plans as appropriate.

School leaders support revisions of plans by adding extra time on units or changing methods used. Data is used by the school leaders and the staff to analyze what is working and what needs to be changed. The principal and the cabinet decide to make changes and adjust plans as needed. The staff implement new plans with support and feedback from the coaches. Committees of staff members monitor the suggested changes to determine their success. This cyclical process occurs as part of the routine of the school, which is focused on continual improvement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Bergen School (PS 1)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

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 student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 			X
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 			X
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			X
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and 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 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	