



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Purvis J Behan School

Public School 011

**419 Waverly Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11238**

Principal: Alonta Wrighton

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Reviewer: Terry Turner

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Purvis J Behan is an elementary school taking students from pre kindergarten through to grade 5. There are currently 486 students enrolled in the school, of whom 88% are Black, 6% Hispanic, 2% Asian and 4% White. English is the first language for the majority of students in the school. The school has 30 special education students who are, in the main, taught in self-contained classes. The eight English language learners make up only a small proportion of the students. The school is eligible for Title 1 funding for 61% of students.

In the last full school year the attendance, at 91%, was slightly lower than that of similar schools and City schools. The principal and her assistant principal were both newly appointed to the school in September 2006.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has quickly and skillfully evaluated strengths in the school and areas for development.
- There is an increasing school wide belief in the philosophy that all decisions are made in the best interests of children.
- The school is beginning to make good use of information gathered from a range of sources, like surveys and student conferencing.
- Teachers consistently challenge students to improve their performance and progress.
- A number of very sound assessment techniques have been promoted and developed by kindergarten and grade 4 teachers.
- Teachers are competently aligning instruction to meet the requirements and demands of the curriculum.
- Collaboration and teamwork are practiced routinely throughout the school.
- Improving the quality of instruction and students' experience of life is at the heart of all professional development decisions.
- Data are being used effectively to shape the vision and direction for the school.
- Teachers have high expectations for student outcomes.

What the school needs to improve

- Spread more widely the good assessment practice that has been established in parts of the school.
- Continue to promote the value of assessment opportunities that arise from project work and student portfolios to plan and set goals.
- Through targeted professional development and increased opportunities for teacher reflection, refine and revitalize programs of study.
- Use the data and information that is being amassed on students' progress to monitor plans and revise goals.
- Encourage greater use of modern technologies to enhance instruction and capture the engagement of students.
- Make better use of data to improve instructional programs for special education students and English language learners.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with some well developed features.

The principal's belief that children come first resonates throughout the building. A climate of high expectations has become firmly established within the school. The impact of this changing culture is seen in the calm and orderly climate and in the improving progress of the students. The newsletters to parents are interesting and informative. Parents are also kept well informed about their child's progress. Attendance at classes before school however, which are essentially designed for those students in greatest need, is low.

Staff value the sense of teamwork and common purpose, and feel well supported. They are punctilious in sharing information in order to provide an integrated picture of each student, for example by ensuring that the progress students make in intervention classes is collated with the information from mainstream classes.

The school is making good use of data to understand differences in student performance. For example an enlightened and successful initiative entitled 'boys to men' is in response to data that boys' results are not as good as girls' in terms of reading and writing and that this frequently leads to behavioral issues.

Overall, students enjoy their learning and show positive attitudes towards their teachers. They have mixed feelings about the length and type of homework that they receive. They also feel that they would like an appropriate forum through which to make their feelings known.

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 proficient.

The collection and analysis of data is becoming a central part of the school's drive for further improvement. The school recognizes the value of qualitative data to supplement the quantitative data provided through a battery of tests. For example all teachers now keep a running record of student's progress and all classrooms are adorned with students' work which celebrates the learning that has taken place. The school measures the progress of students, classrooms and grade levels and is alert to how well its performance compares with that of other schools. Teachers keep a good record of the data relating to students' performance in individual subjects.

With this increased focus on data, teachers are able to build a rounded and up-to-date picture for each student's performance. Kindergarten and grade 4 teachers have combined well to build assessment binders, containing a wide range of assessment information about each student. These are at an early stage of development but teachers are beginning to use them effectively to plan for instruction and to decide where intervention is necessary.

Up until now the school had only a partial view of the achievement of English language learners and special education students. However, the assistant principal is beginning to look at ways of using data more effectively to accelerate the learning of these students and to keep a closer watch on their progress. The school analyzes data relating to the performance of different ethnic groups and has a good working knowledge of their progress. Teachers are also sensitive to the individual home contexts that may ultimately affect achievement.

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 proficient.

The school has clear immediate and long term goals and targets for improvement based on a range of data. For example, the development plan for English language arts has precise and measurable goals, which are realistic through being based upon the data about the school’s past performance and practice. The priorities rightly include the development of reading and writing skills as well as accountable talk or grand conversations. Much of this development work has been achieved through the close collaboration of different groups of staff within the school.

The school is beginning to successfully translate individual student goals into school wide goals. Teachers recognize and acknowledge that there has been a degree of underachievement across all levels. Hence, in kindergarten for example, students now learn not one but two new words each day. The intention is that these words will then be used in context throughout the day to reinforce their meaning. To ensure that all students understand what they read, teachers identify specific points in the text to prompt meaningful talk and higher order thinking skills. These increased expectations are being systematically conveyed to parents. Other sections of the community, for example an art foundation, are being used to enhance students’ appreciation of music, art and drama.

Appropriate attention is given to those students deemed at risk of falling behind where they are expected to be. For example, those who are positioned close to the boundary between levels are targeted for support to move up a level. Goals are communicated to students so that they have a clear idea of what they have to achieve and these goals are invariably time-related. Most importantly, students are made aware of the stepping stones that are needed in order for them to reach the next level. Specific goals and targets for English language learners and special education students are however less well developed.

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 proficient.

The school competently aligns its curriculum to generate meaningful data, for example, in measuring students’ progress in math. The workshop model of instruction is well understood and implemented by teachers and has a positive impact on students’ learning. For example, all mathematics lessons have a clear structure; teachers are well attuned to

the process and are able to gather meaningful data about students' progress. Staffing decisions are based on the perceived needs of the students, an example of this being the movement of a math coach to a grade 5 class for very sound reasons.

The curriculum incorporates a diversity of projects to support learning, for example spelling bees and artists in residence. A number of recreational pursuits like chess; scrabble; knitting; and outdoor games also reinforce learning for many students through a variety of different activities. The school has also successfully introduced a 'resolving conflicts creatively program' which teachers, students and parents believe has induced a calmer atmosphere in school.

The teachers relate well to the students and are trusted by them. They are held accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes by the principal who monitors teaching and results closely. The teachers have high expectations and consistently challenge students to improve their performance and progress. Classrooms are a veritable delight with many examples of stimulating visual aids and displays of students' work. Resources are well organized and easily accessible. However, as yet, assessment practice across the school is inconsistent. Teachers make relatively limited use of modern technologies like computers, data projectors and smart boards. This is potentially depriving students of exciting and innovative modes of learning.

The school places a high premium on good attendance. It has a sound range of strategies to promote it, including rewards for good attendance and immediate home contact for those who are absent.

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 well developed features.

The school is steadfastly building the capacity to improve its performance. The vision, personal commitment and leadership skills of the principal are respected and recognized by staff and parents. She has an administration and staff who share her goals and aspirations. There are many examples of staff working together collaboratively to achieve them. Teachers acknowledge the significance of data as a basis for analyzing students' performance and they set goals that are challenging but realistic. However, they are aware of the need for further professional development in such areas as data management and supporting English language learners and special education students.

The principal and her assistant principal have, through their astute observations of lessons, gained a convincing grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of instruction in each classroom, and know where support is needed. This information has helped them to plan a well conceived program of professional development that is aligned to the school's improvement strategies.

Teachers approach their duties and responsibilities with a high degree of professional commitment. They are very caring and have willingly embraced many changes in a relatively short space of time. There is little doubt that a number of initiatives like assessment binders are proving to be highly successful in providing rich sources of data. However, the true impact of this and other initiatives have yet to be fully evaluated.

The day-to-day running of the school is smooth and orderly. The principal is extremely well organized. All policies and procedures are documented and kept in a file that is a constant source of reference and staff are encouraged to do likewise. Parents comment very favorably on the welcoming nature of the school. Good links have been established with external organizations to support the work of the school. It has, however, encountered difficulty in getting some parents to support the early morning session. This has the effect of potentially damaging the progress of students who are most in need of additional help.

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.

The school has accomplished a sound system for monitoring and evaluating its curriculum and instruction. It is beginning to develop a culture of self-review with a process that it calls 'backward planning'. In this way staff refine and improve their goal setting, .planning and evaluation with each planning cycle informing the next.. Their goal is to make their instruction even more effective. The school recognizes that teachers may need more time to devote to this process if it is to be truly effective.

The administration has a range of well judged and measurable goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan to serve as benchmarks for the students' performance. Teachers monitor the progress of students towards their individual goals effectively. The school monitors progress towards the overarching goals that it knows it must achieve. For example, instructional teams review data from running records to monitor student progress in independent reading levels. The school compares reading levels with State reading levels to determine how well goals are being achieved. Where a student's progress is seen to stall, intervention is activated with new goals to bring the student back on course. Conversely when a student achieves a goal prematurely, more challenging goals are set to extend the student further. Teachers are acutely aware of the dilemma of demanding more of children without suppressing their love of learning.

The school has been very successful in its goal to create student centered classroom environments. For example, in terms of establishing a literacy culture, each classroom now has a grade leveled library; a meeting area; and a writing center. The principal has introduced significant changes in many areas, for example encouraging teachers to use a range of data when assessing students' work and monitoring their progress.

In summary, the school is wise to recognize that meaningful plans are dynamic and, therefore, goals are adjusted in the light of data and information that are accrued over time.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Purvis J Behan School (PS 11)	∅	✓	+
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	