



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Bilingual Center

Public School/Middle School 189

**1100 East New York Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11212**

Principal: Berthe Faustin

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Reviewer: Linda Murgatroyd

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Bilingual Center, (Public School/Middle School 189), serves an ethnically diverse population in Brooklyn. It has 1158 students from kindergarten to grade 8. Students come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, although the greatest proportion (74%) is from Black families. In addition, 24% are Hispanic, with the remaining small number of students being from other backgrounds. Approximately 2% of students have special educational needs. The proportion of students known to be Title 1 eligible is much higher than that of City schools and above similar schools, which are designated as high need schools. There is a much higher proportion of students who are newly arrived in the country than in City-wide schools. They are mainly from Caribbean countries. Over 27% of students are English language learners. Because the school offers instruction in Spanish and Haitian Creole as well as English, it attracts students who speak a language other than English at home. All students learn a foreign language.

The school has a very clear commitment to enabling students to reach high standards, and has been recognized as a High Performing/Closing the Gap School by the State University of New York.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Students' progress is very good, and the school achieves test results which have risen steadily over the past five years and are well above average for City-wide and similar schools.
- The school's expertise as a bilingual center in developing students' language is central to the very good progress they make.
- Data on students' performance is exceptionally well used in decision-making at all levels and staff constantly assess progress and revise goals and plans in response to new information.
- The principal provides outstanding leadership, with a relentless focus on accelerating the progress of every student.
- She is well supported by a highly effective and committed school cabinet, who share leadership responsibility.
- High expectations, shared with staff, students and parents, run throughout the school's approach.
- The school values each student as an individual, celebrates diversity and effectively promotes positive relationships and mutual respect.
- The school is calm and orderly, and students' behavior and attitudes to learning are very good.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue work to bring grade 8 test results in social studies to a level more closely aligned with those in other subjects.
- Develop initiatives to combine the teaching of science content with skills in English language arts.
- Continue to provide support to teachers to extend the very good teaching practice in most classes more fully across the school.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

The school is a highly effective one with a clear commitment to high educational standards in a culture of respect and care for each student. The principal is dedicated to the achievement of her students, and has very high expectations of all those around her. She leads a very effective team by example and, together with her school cabinet, has successfully created a staff group who share these expectations with the whole school community. The majority of teaching is well planned and purposeful and students concentrate and behave well.

Staff at all levels use data very well to monitor and analyze students' progress, and assume responsibility for their own professional development in an atmosphere of support and constructive challenge. As a bilingual center, the understanding of how students develop their language skills is very good, and is central to their achievement. Many students are recently arrived in the country or do not speak English at home. Despite the school's evident success, there is a high level of commitment to continuous improvement and as a result, standards have risen steadily over the past five years.

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 has very effective systems for collecting data of all kinds relating to the performance and progress of individuals and groups of students. This includes information from standardized tests, tests compiled by teachers to check on the skills learned in subject areas, and continuous assessment during lessons. This data, together with information about students' personal development, is carefully analyzed by school leaders and faculty to give a detailed picture of the progress of each student and to indicate the next steps in learning. Tests have been translated by school staff into Haitian Creole to provide more accurate assessment of these students.

The principal and assistant principals carefully monitor overall performance, ensuring that the achievement of ethnic, gender and ability groups are analyzed. Because of the bilingual designation of the school and the high number of students new to the country, they also carry out detailed analysis of the language needs of students, and can pinpoint the achievement of those speaking a particular home language according to their length of time in school. They compare progress of students in each subject, class by class and grade by grade, to ensure that teaching and learning are equally effective for all students. School leaders carefully compare the school's performance against that of similar and city-wide schools. They also compare their present and past results and the relative performance of each cohort of students as they pass through the school. School summative data shows year on year improvement over the past five years in English

language arts, mathematics and science, and the proportion of students reaching levels 3 and 4 in state tests is well above that found city-wide and in similar schools. Achievement in social studies is not as good as in other subjects in grade 8, but the school is working to improve this subject. Graduation rates are very high.

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 wide range of information described above is very well used to ensure that students make good progress, facilitated by a strong communication infrastructure. Most teachers are becoming increasingly confident in analyzing and interpreting statistical data. All faculties know their students well, and use their analysis to determine the next steps for learning, grouping students according to their learning needs and differentiating their instruction to ensure good progress. Discussions in grade, discipline and administrative articulation meetings focus on students’ achievement. The principal meets each teacher individually to review the work of every child in each class to ensure that expectations are sufficiently high and that progress is planned for. Through these discussions, staff support and challenge each other well in ideas for improvement.

Students having difficulty are quickly identified, resulting if appropriate in a referral to the wide range of academic support services. Members of these services work together and share information extremely well, ensuring a coordinated approach to students and their families, and their records demonstrate high levels of success. The bilingual nature of the school ensures that most students receive teaching in their first language. School data show that building students’ first language skills has a resultant increase in their English language fluency.

Expectations for all students are very high, and these are shared with students and their parents through a number of strategies. All students know their test levels and what is expected of them. Parents are also actively involved in discussion of goals and progress towards them. The school sends them information about its expectations and their children’s achievements and targets, shares ideas about how to help at home, and holds meetings to develop this further. As well as formal consultation evenings, teachers keep in contact with parents through telephone calls when they need to give feedback.

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’s curriculum is firmly based on high expectations of students and review of their progress. Information from assessment is well used to identify subjects that need further attention, such as social studies. All staff are involved in curriculum development as they review and evaluate the impact of their teaching. The curriculum mapping exercise recently undertaken ensured the alignment of instruction with the necessary skills and concepts in all subject areas. Action is taken when necessary to support individual or group needs. For example, despite high and improving state test results over the last four to five years the school recognized that no students had gained admission to specialized

high schools. This has led to a program designed to prepare selected students for admission exams. The school has adopted the practice of 'looping' from grade 1 through 8 because data and research show that student were previously experiencing a short 'dip' in learning when they transfer to another class at the start of the year.

The analysis and use of data is central to decision-making in the school. Teachers are held accountable for their students' achievements, through team discussions, the scrutiny of students' work and directly in one to one meetings with the principal. Budget, staffing and scheduling decisions are all firmly based on documented student needs. The principal is creative in the use of the budget to direct resources. Careful attention is paid to using staff talents and strengths to the best advantage. Students are often allocated to particular teachers, including 'push-in', to find compatible matches which enable students to make good progress.

Attendance and punctuality are actively pursued, with a positive approach, including rewarding students. Attendance is very good, higher than in most other schools across the city and most students arrive punctually. The school takes good care of its students, and they are confident that they can bring concerns to members of staff. The school has effective systems to promote good behavior, and in most classes students are attentive to their teachers and concentrate well on their work. In a small minority of classes where classroom management is not well established, there is some low level disruption. Overall, the school's focus on high standards promotes a culture in which students take responsibility for their learning.

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 well developed.

The school carefully selects staff using a range of criteria and involving existing staff in rigorous interviews. Teaching is good and promotes learning very successfully, resulting in very good results in tests. The majority of lessons are carefully planned, challenging and interesting. Learning intentions are shared with students so that they know what they are working on and what they must do to succeed. Good teaching is maintained in a culture of high expectations, discussion and self- and peer-evaluation. In the middle school, there is a need to ensure that students continue to build their English language fluency in all subject areas, particularly science.

Professional development is firmly based on the continuous drive to improve student achievement. Expectations are clearly set out in the staff handbook, and any professional development from outside the school is designed to improve instruction. For example, the recognition that some teachers, especially those new to the school, needed a more structured approach to classroom management led to training in Assertive Discipline. Discussion and debate in teams is an important part of professional development and provides a forum for planning interventions and revising decisions in response to new information. Teachers also share their practice with one another through informal classroom visits, sharing planning and discussing and analyzing students' work. The principal regularly observes teaching and gives feedback. However, teachers would like more formal opportunities for peer observations. There are clear procedures for dealing with any staff underperformance. The impact of professional development is closely evaluated by the principal and assistant principals using data from their monitoring of students' and teachers' performance.

The school is a very calm and orderly place, and is welcoming to students, parents and visitors. The principal and other school leaders are highly respected, and provide a model not only of their high expectations but also of their care and commitment to students and their families. There are productive partnerships with a range of outside bodies such as Brooklyn College and Columbia University, and the school makes very effective use of community-based services, particularly to assist those students and families needing additional support.

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 well developed.

All areas of the school's work are carefully planned drawing on all available data, and kept under constant review. The way that the analysis and use of data permeates the school's practice is a major strength. Staff at all levels assume responsibility for assessing and analyzing students' progress and for planning, evaluating and revising interventions and initiatives according to need. Because data analysis is so well established, plans have precise goals and timeframes, and are revised when new information becomes available. The comprehensive education plan is a working document, reviewed as a whole on several occasions throughout the year. In addition, elements of the plan are reviewed at team meetings and in the principal's discussions with staff.

The effective monitoring and revision of plans operates not only at whole-school level. It is also a feature of the work with individual students. As an example, a large number of staff were involved in the support of a student with a range of needs. After a period of intensive support, which did not achieve the desired impact, it was decided to try a radically different approach. This was successful in helping the student to develop personal skills and to make significant progress.

Despite the school's obvious success, there is no air of complacency, and the principal leads a team with a high level of commitment to further improvement. Many staff ascribe the school's high standards to a combination of high expectations and the precise use of data to guide instruction and determine students' learning needs.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Bilingual Center (PS/MS189)	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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