



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Patrolman Robert Bolden School

Public School 345

**111 Berriman Street
Brooklyn
NY 11208**

Principal: Wanda Holt

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Reviewer: Florence Olajide

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Patrolman Robert Bolden School is an elementary school with an enrollment of 729 students covering pre-kindergarten through grade 5. Fifty-four percent of students are Hispanic and 44% of them are Black. The other 2% of students come from White, Asian and other ethnic backgrounds. About 15% of the students are English language learners and 6% are special education students. At 98%, the proportion of students who are eligible for Title 1 funding is much higher than that of similar and State schools. In 2005 the average attendance was 88.9%. This was lower than that of similar and City schools. Since then, attendance has improved and it is now 91.1%.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and staff provide students with a safe and nurturing learning environment, which promotes high expectations for all students.
- Relationships throughout the school are very positive; staff know the students well and inspire their confidence.
- The school maintains a very positive relationship with parents who actively support its work.
- There are well established procedures for ensuring that all members of the school community contribute to the process of identifying whole school goals and all staff work towards a common purpose.
- Data is used to identify appropriate intervention strategies to improve students' performance.
- The school monitors the progress that students make regularly and uses this information to modify instructional practice.
- The school evaluates the impact of intervention and other organizational strategies and uses this information appropriately to modify its goals and plans.
- Parents are provided with useful and timely information about their children's learning and progress.
- Students have access to a wide range of exciting extracurricular activities, such as the school band, which has won many accolades.
- The school makes effective use of its links with community organizations to enhance curricular opportunities and motivate students.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that school-wide goals are quantifiable and broken down into short term goals to be achieved within reasonable timescales.
- Implement plans to create a professional development schedule which is closely aligned to the school's goals and staff needs.
- Increase the reliability of data by ensuring that all teachers use similar and consistent assessments to monitor students' progress.
- Use data to provide an accurate view of the progress that the higher achieving students make.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Under the leadership of the principal, the staff have worked hard to create a caring and welcoming atmosphere in which every member of the school community feels valued and appreciated. Students describe the school as, 'a good place for kids' where 'everyone is treated equally, including those with special education needs.' There is a strong collaborative culture among staff who perform over and above what is expected of them. One student astutely noted that, 'teachers are dedicated to their jobs.' Parents enjoy a mutually beneficial relationship with the school. They feel secure that the academic and personal well-being of students is of paramount importance to staff. The principal and other leaders collect and use data to form an accurate view of areas of strength and those requiring further development. They are strongly focused on improving students' performance and use the data to set appropriate goals to this end. They also evaluate the effectiveness of instructional practice and modify programs accordingly. This effective use of data has led to improved outcomes for most students. The school offers a wide choice of extra curricular and enrichment activities which enhance the curriculum and motivate students to learn.

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 school analyzes data from the City and State tests. As a result, leaders have a clear understanding of annual trends and patterns in students' overall performance in comparison to similar or City schools. The data is used to identify areas of underperformance at individual, class or grade level. The school checks the performance of special education students and those who are English language learners. It also monitors the performance of the two main ethnic groups as well as the small number of individuals from other ethnic backgrounds. However, the school does not yet analyze its data to identify trends in the performance of other groups, such as higher performing students.

Teachers carry out additional tests, which they use to measure students' progress within the year. This information is analyzed carefully and used to identify those who could benefit from additional help. However, from class to class, teachers use different assessments for this purpose. While each teacher has a clear view of the progress their students are making, the school finds it difficult to track this progress year to year due to the different assessments. A consequence of this lack of consistency is that, at the beginning of each year, some teachers have to start their assessments from scratch, rather than build on the progress students have already made. The school has realized that this duplicates effort and wastes time. It therefore plans to create a common system among teachers so that students' progress can be clearly tracked from year to year.

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 a well established procedure for setting goals at whole-school level. The school leadership team, which includes administrators, teachers and parents, initiates the process and fully involves other members of the school community. The goals strongly reflect the areas requiring improvement as identified through the data. However, they do not define measurable outcomes for students. The school does not yet break the whole-school goals down into short term ones, nor does it identify timeframes for reaching them. Nonetheless, the goals drive the activity of the school community and the school leadership team meets regularly to review the progress made towards achieving them.

From the whole-school goals, individual teachers define annual goals in relation to the performance of the students in their classes. These are translated into appropriate learning goals for individual students. Special education students are given individual short-term goals which are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are making progress. Throughout the school, there is a strong emphasis on moving students from level 2 to level 3, which is the minimum acceptable standard. Moving them from level 3 to level 4 does not have the same impetus and this to some extent reflects the weak analysis of data in relation to the performance of the higher achieving students.

Systems for sharing goals with parents and students are effective. These include open house days at the beginning of the academic year, where teachers explain their annual goals to parents and inform them of the expectations of students’ work. As a result, parents have a good understanding of the range and complexity of work that their children are expected to produce within the year. Furthermore, at bi-annual meetings teachers and parents discuss each student’s goals and the progress being made towards them. Students attend these meetings and are part of the process. These combined with regular feedback from tests enable students to know how well they are doing and what level they need to aim for next. Teachers keep parents informed of any changes to students’ progress, which require immediate intervention. Parents are pleased that outside of the formal meetings, teachers are available at any time for discussion.

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 curriculum supports students’ academic and personal development. It includes a strong arts element where students excel in art and music. There is a wide range of extracurricular and enrichment activities which students enjoy. In addition to the mandated curriculum the school uses a range of other programs to meet the needs of students. These include computerized programs, which have built-in assessments units that provide timely feedback to teachers and students. These and other programs generate useful data which the school uses to match students to appropriate additional intervention programs where necessary. Programs are evaluated regularly and discontinued where they are found to be ineffective.

The school modifies teaching schedules and the use of teacher time to accommodate the needs of students. For example, additional staff have been hired and Saturday instruction is provided to improve the performance of students who are English language learners.

Teachers are held accountable for improving instruction and students' outcomes. The strong use of data ensures that they know the needs of their students very well. They use the data to define teaching groups within their classes. They adjust teaching styles to the subject matter and match instructional activities to students' needs. As one English language learner explained, 'they help you to go through the work slowly and give you techniques to work out the problem in the simplest way.' Students also say that teachers push them to, 'do well and really try hard.' They enjoy lessons and actively engage in activities, particularly when teachers make them practical or relate them to students' own life experiences. Teachers have begun to use instructional materials for higher grades to provide the higher achieving students with additional challenge. However, this work is not yet linked to specific goals for this group.

The school runs several workshops for parents to enable them to support their children better at home. Parents believe their children are happy at school. The principal promotes an open door policy and this together with the family atmosphere means students feel comfortable asking any adult for help.

Attendance has been lower than the average for City and similar schools for a number of years. The school's concerted effort to increase attendance is beginning to have an impact and the attendance rate is beginning to rise.

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 principal is very well respected by all members of the school community. She is described by all as supportive and approachable, including students, one of whom explains that, 'she is like a mother who cares about everyone.' Students know that she checks up on how well they are doing and that she makes sure that they, 'get a good education.' Staff follow her strong lead and together, they provide students with a positive and well ordered learning environment in which they thrive. All staff are committed to using data to improve outcomes for students, meet regularly to do so, and express a desire to further improve their knowledge and understanding in this area.

Staff have access to a range of professional development opportunities. For example, there has been a strong focus in the recent past on improving teachers' ability to match their instruction accurately to students needs and ability. Nonetheless, the school is aware that it does not yet tailor professional development activities closely enough to the school goals and the needs of individual teachers. It has therefore begun the process of creating a professional development plan which reflects this.

The school has rigorous systems for monitoring and improving the quality of instructional practice. The principal and assistant principals frequently observe teaching formally and informally. This information gathered is used to make professional development decisions and the constructive feedback teachers are provided helps to improve instruction. Staff have various opportunities to learn from one another and share good practice. Some have also worked in mixed-grade internal teams to review instruction at whole-school level.

Teams such as the academic intervention services team and grade teachers meet regularly to review data on students' progress and to modify support and curriculum plans accordingly.

The school has a number of successful and useful partnerships with outside organizations which significantly enhance students' learning, promote good attendance and build students' self-esteem.

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.

Assessments are frequent and are used to check how well students are doing in relation to goals. Grade leaders and coaches use data to identify students at risk of not meeting the expected standards or those who require additional support to do well. Where students fail to make appropriate progress they are referred to the academic intervention services for further support.

The school checks that its plans are working through formal and informal observations and through discussions with staff. The school leadership team reviews the Comprehensive Education Plan regularly and evaluates its impact. Where necessary, adjustments are made to take account of new or emerging issues. For example, analysis of students' performance in science led the school to reassign a teacher to provide additional specialist teaching in the subject. A new science laboratory was also established to provide students with practical hands-on experience. As a result of its analysis of data and other information, the school is currently reviewing its grouping of students into homogeneous groups and plans to modify this next year.

The school leadership team manages a whole-school process which involves the analysis of data, review of plans, dissemination of information, gathering of views and the setting of new goals. Each member of the team takes responsibility for consulting with a specific section of the school community. This ensures that all views are taken into account when setting new goals.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Patrolman Robert Bolden School (PS 345)	∅	✓	+
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	