



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**The School for Business, Finance and  
Entrepreneurship**

**Middle School 385**

**125 Stuyvesant Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11221**

**Principal: Glyn Marryshow**

**Dates of review: April 18 - 19, 2007**

**Reviewer: Donna Dimino**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The School for Business, Finance and Entrepreneurship, located in North Brooklyn, opened in 1999 as a grade 6 through 8 middle school. Although the school's admissions are based on a region-wide selection process, the majority of the students are from nearby Brooklyn communities. Of the 289 students enrolled, about 87% are Black, 10% are Hispanic and 3% are Asian/Pacific Islander. There are approximately 60 (21%) special education students, both in self-contained classes as well as in general education classes receiving special support services, and 10 (3.5%) English language learners. English is the main language spoken. The school receives Title 1 funding with a significantly higher proportion of students eligible compared to the average for City schools.

The school shares common areas, including the gym, cafeteria, auditorium and library, with the elementary school which uses the same building.

Attendance hovers at 87%, somewhat lower than that of similar schools. The small number of students who have moved but have yet to be removed from the school's register has a significant negative impact on attendance statistics.

## Part 2: Overview

## **What the school does well**

- The administrative team is highly respected by all members of the school community as it is visible, accessible and very supportive of staff and students.
- High priority is given to instruction as well as to the social and emotional needs and well-being of individual students.
- There are good systems in place to analyze data from external tests and collect school-generated data to help teachers meet the needs of individual students, particularly those in greatest need of improvement.
- The staff support one another well, work collaboratively and have high expectations for themselves as professionals.
- The teachers plan together and support each other's initiatives, which enable skills and concepts to be taught through different subjects.
- Adults know and care for the students extremely well, and as a result, students feel physically and emotionally safe and can share any concern they have with a number of adults in the school.
- The school is engaged very positively with an external partner in piloting an innovative computer program for teaching mathematics.
- The school is well-maintained, organized and inviting.

## **What the school needs to improve**

- Set clear, measurable goals for school improvement by devising action plans which draw more strongly on input from teachers, parents and students and are shared widely with the school community.
- Check progress towards the school's improvement goals at regular intervals to assess how well strategies and programs are working and where adjustment is needed.
- In consultation with individual students, set clear, measurable goals for improvements in achievement across all levels of attainment.
- Improve students' behavior during transition and lunchtimes through more rigorous programs to develop student engagement, self-discipline and responsibility.
- Make greater use of analysis of data to explore potential differences between the achievements of various groups of students.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

The School for Business, Finance and Entrepreneurship is dedicated and committed to its students and to improvement in student outcomes. The principal, who has led the school since one year after its inception, is passionate that his students have real world opportunities. Based on high expectations, he aims to expose them to the many exciting paths a career in science can take them, forensics for one. As a result, he has rigorously weeded out staff that do not fit with the school's aims and philosophy. The school now has the staff needed to move forward in raising achievement and engaging instruction.

A strong addition has been the assistant principal who is in her second year in that position. She is instrumental in driving and implementing the structures and systems for improvement, but some of these plans are only partially complete. All constituencies within the school have much to offer willingly, but the formal structures for sharing their ideas and making decisions are not yet fully secure.

Morale is high. Teachers help each other, volunteer their lunch periods to help students, stay late and find many opportunities outside of school meeting times to discuss their students' work. Building and nurturing relationships is the strong foundation for their work.

### 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 collects and compiles data to measure the performance of individual students by subjects, classrooms and grade levels. Data is analyzed and used to inform staff of skill weaknesses for both individual and small group instruction. Data is readily accessible to all staff members. The school has some very good systems to check performance and monitor the progress of students. Data is gathered from various external assessments as well as from uniform unit tests created in the subject areas. The teachers use school-based assessments regularly. All data is organized and analyzed across skill areas and put into easily read spreadsheets to show each student's areas of need. Binders containing data-tables and logs, portfolios and student notebooks are used to record and track students' progress.

The teachers plan collaboratively and speak regularly with the coaches, intervention teachers and administration about students' performance. The data is used to check the progress of special education students and English language learners and to adjust support as necessary. The school is piloting a computer-based mathematics program that reinforces instruction and provides individual interventions. It is being used mainly with students in need of improvement. A control group has been chosen to make valid comparisons across classrooms. This brings an exciting new dimension to the students' work in mathematics, which they relish.

However, the school does not analyze the data it gathers in sufficient depth to gain a clear view of students' achievement by gender or between other student groups. The school does not grasp opportunities fully, to compare its performance with that of similar schools.

**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's administration team and staff engage well in collaborative lesson planning and make good use of data to identify and address students' individual needs. The administration use the data to set each teacher a goal for the year, quantifying the number of students they expect to move into grade level achievement. The result is that most attention is given to the progress of those students in greatest need of improvement. These students have extra help during the school day in the form of various push-in and pull-out intervention services as well as the 'Math Lab' that is being piloted. Their needs are also addressed further during the school's extended day program. Although the school focuses strongly on the lower performing students, those who are at or above grade level do not receive the same range or depth of enrichment to promote or extend their thinking.

Although systems for tracking students' progress in English language arts and mathematics are well established, they are not part of a larger, precisely thought-out development plan. The school action plans do not have sufficiently rigorous structures to make explicit its expectations or to target students' growth in other subjects and in some aspects of social demeanor and behavior. The school does not consistently apply its existing procedures or communicate its expectations, both academic and behavioral, sufficiently clearly to students and parents.

Parents fully appreciate the school's open door policy and feel their concerns and questions are addressed quickly and respectfully. While parent involvement is limited, the parent coordinator is industrious in acting as a mediator between parents and the school. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to help parents and students support the school more and invest in the students' growth and progress. Parents are not informed sufficiently about the achievements, goals, expectations and work of the school.

**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's reading and mathematics programs are well-established. The school has adapted its literacy program to align with assessments and sequenced it to meet the needs of the students. The mathematics pilot is aligned carefully to State assessments and the program for schools to follow. Various commercial intervention programs are matched to students according to assessed need and to provide meaningful data to inform planning. The literacy and mathematics coaches regularly support classroom teachers and administration by creating uniform monthly subject-based assessments, coaching teachers and collaborating with planning teams. Aligned with the school's thematic focus, business

is taught but only as a coverage subject. The curriculum does not incorporate enough authentic, project-based business education.

The administration makes astute budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions to support the schools' overall goals. The teachers in each subject area have weekly common preparation time to enable data analysis and planning in teams. This supports differentiation. Each teacher is assigned a small group of students with similar needs for extra help during their professional period. The paraprofessionals use intervention programs well with selected students. The two building principals collaborate to share resources and enable students with particular talents to receive art and music lessons. There are examples of engaging instruction with students responding enthusiastically. This has been developed best in the English language arts and mathematics classrooms, where there are pockets of excellence, and is currently developing in science now that a teacher with a science license has been hired. Students engage well in their lessons.

Comprehensive procedures are in place to increase attendance and reduce lateness and cutting of classes. Home visits by staff and administration in support of these measures illustrate the school's dedication to reach every student. The school's support staff speak frequently with teachers and administration, both formally and informally, to discuss students' needs and plan intervention. Students say they feel safe and cared about and say they always have an adult to whom they can turn if they have a problem.

**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.**

The principal has been very careful to replace staff with those that fit with the school's aims and philosophy. The school now has the staff needed to move forward in raising achievement and engaging instruction. Formal and informal observations by the principal and assistant principal provide teachers with specific constructive criticism for improvement and help determine professional development needs. The school environment is one of collegiality and support for one another. The teachers receive professional development from coaches and from regular collaborations. They collaborate regularly and informally outside of scheduled meetings as well. The result is much discussion, integration of curriculum and embedded professional training. Members of staff have access to a range of professional development opportunities outside the school.

Staff have the capacity to continuously improve the quality of their work, in particular their instructional practice. There are pockets of excellence in master teaching to build upon, especially in mathematics. However, current structures and accountability systems for inter-class visits are not used enough to spread and standardize best practices in management and delivery of instruction.

The principal is widely respected by staff, students and parents. He demonstrates enormous care for every student's academic and emotional progress. He is extremely well supported by the assistant principal who collects, analyzes, disseminates and monitors data with coaches, intervention staff, support staff, and teacher teams. She is a major contributor to the school's continuing improvement.

Most day-to-day operations run smoothly. Students are engaged in their lessons, and in class their behavior is good and at times exemplary particularly where teachers use

agreed procedures consistently. In corridors at change-over and in the cafeteria the students demonstrate a relaxed exuberance which, at times, lacks self-control. Noise levels are unnecessarily high, and social conversation in the cafeteria is all but impossible.

The staff are extremely dedicated to their work, the school culture, and their students, whom they know individually very well. As strong advocates for the school, they speak passionately about creative solutions for improved youth development activities. Staff are encouraged to write proposals-for-review for developments or projects they would like to see implemented. However, the school lacks a more formal, regular forum to sound out ideas, develop and refine plans and drive such initiatives more effectively.

**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 undeveloped with proficient features.**

The school leadership recognizes the importance of built-in structures to establish on-going assessment of students' progress. Currently, weekly common time for departments and monthly grade meetings are used for teachers to confer with coaches to discuss students and their work, look at external and school-generated data, and plan the curriculum. The need to collect and analyze data has led to the establishment of a comprehensive procedure for how this work takes place to maintain integrity and cohesion. This is particularly true in literacy and mathematics across grades, classrooms and with individual students. Monitoring has begun, but there are insufficient routine reviews at regularly scheduled points to check on progress or to initiate immediate revisions if the school is not on track to reach its goals.

The Comprehensive Education Plan does not yet include well-developed plans for individual students, various groups of students, all academic content areas, youth development and school culture as key priorities.

The staff understanding of procedures and systems is not consistent or updated and disseminated sufficiently to all members of the school community on a regular basis. As a result, developments lack the full impetus needed to accelerate the school's rate of progress. The school has made progress toward reaching some of its goals, but more work is needed to widen participation amongst members of the school community. The parents, students and staff are not involved sufficiently in discussions to set the direction for development, implementation and evaluation of school initiatives, innovations and policies.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The School for Business, Finance and Entrepreneurship (MS385)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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"> <li>each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>		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"> <li>ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>		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"> <li>all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>	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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		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.

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>		X	
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>		X	
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>	X		