



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Luis Belliard School**

**Public School 008**

**167 Street  
New York  
NY 10032**

**Principal: Rafaela Landin**

**Dates of review: December 6 - 8, 2006**

**Reviewer: Frank Jones**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Public School 8 operates in partnership with the Children's Aid Society. The school has an enrollment of 656 students in kindergarten through grade 5. Hispanic students make up 95% of the school's enrolment, and 5% are Black. When they enter the school, just over 50% of the students are English language learners, a far higher proportion than similar and City schools. There are 11% special education students, a similar proportion to that typically found in similar and City schools.

The school receives Title I funding. Attendance figures are presently 95%, which is above the average of similar and City schools. The school offers Head Start and early Head Start classes for children ranging from infancy to four years of age.

The school is organized in two academies, the Bright Beginnings Academy (kindergarten through grade 2) and the Langston Hughes Academy (grades 3 through 5). Each has an assistant principal in charge. Students are taught in Spanish and English.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal provides outstanding leadership and a passion for education that is acknowledged by those she leads and the wider community she serves.
- The staff is highly motivated and committed to providing for the social, emotional and academic needs of all students and parents.
- Senior staff analyze the wealth of data available and use this analysis to lead instruction.
- The school is committed to being a learning organization where everyone is a learner.
- The close links with the Children's Aid Society enhance educational opportunities for parents and students through the extended day program.
- The school succeeds in creating a stimulating learning environment that is reflected in the quality of presentation of student work and documentation.
- The design team, led by the principal, encompasses a range of significant interested parties and is an effective driving force in both strategic and operational development.
- The design team regularly monitors the school's performance and its impact on student progress and achievement.
- The school targets professional development to individual and school needs, ensuring that staff are prepared for initiatives prior to and after their implementation.
- The organization of the school supports the development of teaching, learning and student achievement, and engenders close relationships with and within each academy.

### What the school needs to improve

- Revisit strategies that enable differentiated instruction to take place throughout the school, but specifically grades 3 to 5, to ensure they are established in teachers' practice.
- Use data and the evaluation of students' work to further develop the setting of measurable and challenging goals that focus on each student's end of year expected attainment, their capabilities and what they need to learn.
- Continue to develop, identify and share with the students the incremental learning steps they need to take to achieve their goals.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

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

Since the principal was appointed, she has identified key issues that the school needed to address and subsequently implemented a comprehensive plan to achieve the associated goals. She has involved the community in the planning and implementation process so all feel engaged and excited by the developments. Support for the community is a significant strength of the school.

Staff enjoy and are committed to their work, and students are generally engaged by their learning. There is a unified and purposeful direction to what all staff do. The principal gives strong leadership tempered with compassion and concern for all those she leads, but is uncompromising in her quest for excellence for all students. She knows her fellow administrators well and through delegation has empowered them to carry out their leadership roles. The result is an efficient and effective team with a single purpose. This system encourages both staff and students to work as a team and to identify with their academy as part of the whole school.

The design team constantly examines the difference it is making to groups and individual students using the comprehensive data it collects and analyzes. The school sets high expectations for achievement for all students and is able to draw on a range of support programs to meet identified needs.

The areas for improvement identified in this report are predominantly those already identified by the school and reflect the transformation taking place. It is too early to see the impact of all the new strategies, so although there are major strengths in the school's work it is still a proficient school. What is clear is that this school has significant capacity to sustain improvement.

### 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 uses a wide range of external and school-generated assessments and tests to monitor progress and achievement on a regular basis. These are intelligently analyzed by the principal and assistant principals prior to disseminating the information to staff. The data gives valuable information on student progress and achievement. It identifies clearly all groups of students who are under-performing and enables the school to evaluate the impact of targeted support on achievement. Teachers, all of whom have received training to improve their understanding and use of data, use this information well to plan additional help in a specific aspect of the curriculum and to refocus their teaching to meet identified shortcomings in areas of achievement.

Progress of individual students is measured and monitored in English language arts through monthly scrutiny of written work and formal assessments in mathematics at the

end of each unit. The assistant principals chart the progress and achievement for each student. Marking of student work and report cards are aligned to grade standards to establish progress. Exemplars of texts are used to establish consistency of judgment in and between each level. This information is used to identify whether additional intervention strategies or enrichment activities are required.

The principal uses test data to track closely trends over time and compare the school's performance to similar schools. Instructional leaders effectively interpret interim assessment data to ascertain where they have been successful and those areas that need additional work for individuals, by class and grade. A more detailed analysis is used to establish trends in performance at each subject level, but there is less emphasis on the analysis of the performance of other groupings within the school, such as ethnicity or gender.

**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.**

Staff clearly want to do the best for their students and this is reflected in their commitment to supporting all students. The strong team culture that exists within both academies ensures that planning is very much a collaborative exercise. This is most evident in the dual language classes where students move from being taught in Spanish by one teacher to being taught in English by another, yet the theme or topic remains the same. The school has implemented strategies for its high percentage of English language learners, which are starting to improve achievement. Progress against individualized plans for special education students is carefully monitored.

The school sets detailed interim and long-term goals, but these tend to focus on specific curriculum areas or activities rather than on individual students' learning needs. Not all teachers use data effectively to establish measurable long-term goals for students based on their previous attainment. Ongoing assessment of work is effective and teachers use this information to extend students' learning through general teaching points, marking of work and conferencing sessions. Each student has an annotated portfolio that is used to monitor progress and achievement and any additional support. When the annotations describe the next steps in learning, they are effective but this is not common practice, especially in grades 3, 4 and 5.

All parents are regularly informed about the curriculum and their children's progress. The principal runs sessions for parents on understanding data so they can interpret the school's results that are prominently displayed in the school entrance. Parents appreciate and fully support the high aspirations that the school has for their children and the commitment of the staff. The students themselves are well aware of what is expected of them and are generally well motivated.

**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 is careful to ensure it matches the curriculum to meet the needs of the students. It has a clear focus on the basic skills of English language arts and mathematics, as well as providing good opportunities for students in other subjects. The curriculum across academies is consistent and continuous with regard to the basic subjects and skills, and the individual identities of both academies are reflected in the varied emphases and themes. Comprehensive programs of targeted support are in place to help English language learners and special education students, and to support those students at risk of not reaching grade standards.

The teachers are fully aware of their accountability to make sure students achieve as well as they can. As part of this process, the assistant principals closely monitor the performance of students by observing lessons and looking at students’ work. Such observations and activities are followed by discussion with the relevant member of staff, a process that teachers welcome and that has a positive impact on instruction.

Teachers use information from assessments to refine their instructional programs. However, because of the inconsistency in the setting of goals, some teachers deliver the same broad curriculum to all students and so activities are not sufficiently differentiated. The school understands the importance of clearly identifying each student’s next steps in learning and intends to develop this aspect of instructional support. Goals in individual education plans for special education students are specific to need and help teachers plan the next steps in learning.

The principal uses data to make budget decisions, inform staffing and resource requirements. These have included the purchase of an electronic whiteboard and laptops as part of an investment in technology to support learning. There is a good match of both staffing and resources to meet the needs of students and the curriculum.

The school knows students’ personal needs well. It has a strict behavior code, which most students appreciate. Effective age-appropriate strategies have been developed to monitor and encourage good behavior. Suspensions have fallen as a result of this positive approach. Students are confident to ask for help or discuss any concerns with an adult. Students are engaged in lessons that are aligned well to the range of interests and abilities in class. When learning is relevant, students concentrate well. The positive attitude of students in coming to school is reflected in a higher than average attendance rate. The school closely monitors attendance and contacts parents on the second day of absence.

**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 gives outstanding leadership and is passionate about raising the achievement of all students in her school. She has fully embraced the concept of a community school and as a result the overall academic and social services it offers are

well developed. The school is at the center of the community and provides an exceptionally valuable service for its members.

The principal has empowered and developed her assistant principals and design team, so that, as a group, they lead the school with a clear sense of purpose and direction. Teachers fully support the administration in their pursuit of excellence and understand what they want to achieve. The achievement and welfare of the students are at the heart of all the school does. Administrators and teachers are actively encouraged to think critically, take risks and to encourage their students and parents to have high aspirations.

Teachers are carefully selected to meet the needs of the school. Professional development is valued by the teachers and underpins the rising achievement within the school. Training supports new initiatives and is closely aligned to the needs of the school and students. Regular classroom observation ensures the administration knows the capabilities of every staff member. All concerned view the process as developmental and observations are followed by professional dialogues and appropriate training to enhance development. The school recognizes that the number of initiatives and the frequency of visits sometimes leave little time for new initiatives to become fully embedded in practice. Teachers also welcome the opportunity to watch colleagues teach.

The principal is transforming the school. All staff support her unequivocally, recognize her achievements and are aware of her intentions. Opportunities are created for teachers to work collaboratively across and within academies to plan together, evaluate classroom performance and revise programs. Teachers are involved in decision-making and are confident in voicing their opinions. The school runs smoothly because the structures and practices have clarity and are understood. Partnerships with outside bodies give considerable support to the achievement of the school's goals, especially through the comprehensive after-school programs.

**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.**

The school has comprehensive systems in place to review the work of the school. Teams meet regularly to review the school's goals and adjust plans. The review of one year's performance is used to agree the following year's goals. The school utilized the America's Choice Comprehensive School Reform design to manage school change effectively. The School Restructuring Plan clearly details the steps that need to be taken. By using the analysis of data and evaluating its overall effectiveness, the school has identified key areas for improvement and associated training activities. It has recognized where adjustments to programs are necessary to achieve goals. The school carefully evaluates the impact of these changes on student learning and modifies future plans accordingly. The trend in results is upward and the principal is committed to seeing this trend continue rise.

Both academies use data regularly to decide what they have to do to further develop students' achievement. Teachers refocus their teaching to fill gaps identified in some curriculum subjects. This realignment of the curriculum is ongoing and reflects the school's view that the needs of students, whatever their performance level, are at the center of all its work.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Luis Belliard School (PS 008)</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