



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Bread and Roses Integrated Arts High School**

**High School 685**

**6 Edgecombe Ave**

**New York**

**NY, 10030**

**Principal: Larry Wilson**

**Dates of review: December 6 – 7, 2006**

**Reviewer: Helenmary Stark**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Bread and Roses Integrated Arts School is a small high school with an enrollment of 488 students from grades 9-12. It serves a mixed population of 54% Black, 44% Hispanic, 1% White and a small proportion of Asian and students from other ethnic backgrounds. One in five students is an English language learner, but nearly 50% of the students speak a language other than English at home. This is much higher than similar and City schools. More than 20% of students are identified as requiring special education services which is a higher proportion than similar and City schools. The school deliberately maintains a small community to encourage everyone involved in the school and within the local community to work collaboratively. Attendance is in line with City schools and better than in similar schools.

The school was founded in 1997 as a New Visions school focused on the theme of organizing for social change, social justice and the arts. It offers a range of sporting and arts opportunities to students including basketball, baseball, dance and film production.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has demonstrated his ability to make significant organizational changes that have clearly benefited the whole school.
- The principal and his administration share a clear vision focused on the expectation of high achievement for all students.
- Staff teams use performance data and ongoing assessment to inform their planning of each unit of work.
- Staff appointments are clearly linked to the goals and vision of the school.
- Staff use all available data to plan for the year ahead and are flexible in their approach.
- Professional development is a key feature of the school.
- Curriculum decisions and scheduling reflect the learning needs of the students and the high expectations articulated by the teachers.
- Opportunities offered in collaboration with external agencies and professionals significantly enrich students' learning.
- Students are enthusiastic about the school and they feel supported academically and personally.
- Relationships with parents are good.

### What the school needs to improve

- Further develop measurable long-term and interim goals for individual student's achievement in mathematics and English language arts.
- Refine further the schools' goals to enable a more structured and rigorous evaluation of its improvement plans.
- Further develop teachers' skills in the use of assessment data to plan differentiated learning and support for students.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well developed school.**

The principal gives inspirational leadership, and sets high expectations for all students. These are reinforced through monthly grade meetings where students' achievement is celebrated and honored. An increasingly strong and dedicated team shares the school's vision for success and sees 'education as the great equalizer'. Data on performance and progress, accumulations of credits, the quality of instruction and the tone of the school are all used well to focus effective development planning.

There is a strong instructional basis to all decisions about professional development. This is demonstrated in the focus of the 'learning walks' and the application of the ten learning principles developed by the University of Pittsburg. Students feel that they are generally treated with respect. Parents recognize and are pleased that their children have grown in confidence in the last two to three years and that the care offered to their children is akin to being part of an extended family.

### 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 collects an extensive range of test data and information from its own comprehensive assessments to gain a secure, updated knowledge and understanding of each student's performance and progress. Data is shared with staff so student progress can be tracked closely to ensure that no student is at risk of failing behind. Equally, data is analyzed closely to identify students capable of exceeding standards and to move into honors classes.

Data for English language learners and special education students is extensively monitored. Interim goals in individual education plans are reviewed six times a year. Students' results are analyzed to see if they might be at risk of failure. Where there is concern, steps are taken to ensure that those students have a place in specific extended-school sessions, or at summer school. The instructional program was originally designed for portfolio-based assessment, but following a close review and evaluation of this system, the school now awards diplomas based on the Regent's exams.

The school compares data to look for trends in relation to past performance, similar schools, grades and ethnic groupings in all subjects. The data is used effectively to plan improvement strategies and intervention and enrichment activities.

**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.**

Student performance is the focus for all decisions in the school. Aspirations are incorporated into the faculty handbook and inspirational quotes are on display around the building. Staff members have high aspirations for the students and are involved fully in the review of the school goals and development planning. The majority of teachers write helpful progress reports to their students and which give clear guidance on what the students need to do next. As a result, students have a clear understanding of how well they are performing in these subjects and know how to improve their work.

The school has ambitious plans to realize its vision of high student attainment. However, goals are expressed as actions rather than measurable outcomes and do not have interim markers by which to gauge progress.

The principal and his administration encourage teachers to focus strongly on what the students should know by the end of the lesson. Intervention strategies for special education students are planned by the special education teacher working with the teachers and the principal.

Currently, there is a clear focus on the class of 2007 with continuous analysis of achievement and projected outcomes. This analysis is used to plan units of work, but less specifically to plan teaching strategies that focus precisely on individual student's learning. Following analysis of assessment data and review of class structures, English language learners are now in smaller classes with programs more suited to their needs. For some, mathematics is now taught bilingually. The English language arts team is trialing a new grading system to compare pieces of students' work in order to develop greater consistency in awarding grades.

High expectations have been clearly expressed to the students since the arrival of the new principal. All staff deal promptly with concerns raised by parents and discuss report cards and attendance records whenever the need arises. Parents are delighted at how well their children are now progressing and how they are involved in the process.

**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.**

Data has been used very well to improve the way the curriculum is planned and implemented to meet the needs of all students. Regularly evaluations lead to ongoing adjustments where necessary changes are identified. Examples of such improvements designed to increase the students' pass rate include the introduction of Regent's preparation classes, a senior elective in history, leadership with a focus on writing and opportunities for enrichment from the programs offered through external professional teams.

Systems for differentiating instruction at whole school level are well developed. A comparison of students' progress in grades is used to plan effective intervention strategies for special education students, English language learners and those at risk of not reaching

grade standards. Data is used effectively to plan some extension classes for higher achievers. Teachers understand their accountability for student outcomes. They analyze data at the end of each unit of work in order to determine which students need more help and what the new focus of learning needs to be. However, they plan less assuredly to differentiate for their students' individual learning needs within specific classes. Rubrics are being developed but at the moment they are not used to provide diagnostic assessments of students' progress in relation to longer-term goals.

Budgeting decisions focus on the school plan to improve the students' progress. These decisions include a reduction in class sizes to maintain a low student to teacher ratio, the addition of extended day classes; and the provision of a dance floor in the small dance studio. Data is used to plan classes and groups, schedule teachers and focus on the outcomes for students. The drive to improve mathematics and English language arts has resulted in the use of double teaching periods from September 2006. Guidance counselors visit classes to ensure all students are well informed of the credit structure with the aim of increasing the percentage of students who move to sophomore status. A review of assessment data from students with individual education plans is used to decide whether, for example, a 15:1 setting for some subjects is appropriate.

Many of the classes engage students well, for example by making good use of electronic whiteboards in mathematics and by following well-chosen college courses. The majority of staff know the students well and take a personal interest in their academic progress and well-being. Attendance is rigorously monitored. The school's goal of 90% is achievable due to its rewarding perfect attendance as an incentive.

**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 has clear criteria for appointing staff. These relate to the schools' goals and include requirements of extensive subject knowledge and the ability to self-evaluate personal performance. Professional development is focused strongly on improving instruction in order to achieve the school's goals.

The principal and his administration observe lessons formally and informally. A key activity is the classroom walk-through, undertaken regularly by teachers and the senior leadership to gain a full picture of the school's work. The current focus of academic rigor in a thinking curriculum is discussed within teams and followed up by the coaches to improve the quality of instruction generally. The monitoring activities also provide valuable data about teaching, which feeds into school and professional development planning making good use of coaches and external consultants where appropriate. Verbal feedback to teachers is usually in the form of questions to stimulate reflection on their practices. Coaches work in classes observing students and subsequently work with teachers to reinforce the current school areas of focus.

Teams are released to plan together using cohort data. The creation of the new professional physical spaces has encouraged teachers to meet more frequently on an informal basis to discuss students' progress and aspects of instruction. Using performance data and looking at changing requirements for future tests, teams of teachers plan units of work together. For example, in mathematics planning for new testing requirements has led to a review of the curriculum to better meet the students' needs.

More specific analysis of the curriculum has prompted new teaching approaches which are then followed through with professional development.

The principal is highly respected by teachers, parents and students. Parents feel that he has turned the school from chaos into a place where their children feel safe. He is dedicated and demonstrates high expectations for all students. His administration team says he leads by example as an active learner who is open to new ideas.

The school now has a calm, well ordered atmosphere. Discipline and referral policies have been clarified and communicated to all. A school dress code has been introduced. Clear expectations and the consistent approach of staff have resulted in a significant improvement in behavior within the school. The school works cohesively with a variety of support services. The appointment of the substance-abuse prevention intervention specialist, the use of the school mediation team and the work with the school- based clinic all provide valuable personal support for students. After school courses including martial arts, African dance and drama activities with professional artists enrich learning well.

**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 leadership team plays an active role in developing school strategy. All teachers are involved in the annual review of data in June that contributes to the following year's Comprehensive Education Plan and specific curriculum planning. The expectation that all seniors would have a college place to go to in 2006 was fulfilled and honors classes have been established. Teachers use both objective performance data and ongoing assessment to measure student progress in relation to units of work and the Regent's tests.

The administration regularly reviews the impact of their actions. Plans are adapted using information from performance data, learning walks-through, feedback from coaches and general observations. Four times a year staff come together to review the plan. The principal is aware that the plan could have even sharper focus in terms of measurable outcomes and clear timescales so that monitoring and evaluation activities could be still more effective. An analysis of feedback on professional development resulted in the allocation of specific areas of the school as professional spaces for mathematics, English language arts, science and special education. Flexible thinking is evident from the way the school has been reorganized so that service providers are more easily accessible to students and parents.

A key strength of the principal and his team is, as one student said about the teachers in the school, 'they are passionate about their job'. As a team, the staff are able to acknowledge the significant developments that have taken place in school within the last two years. At the same time they recognize that it is work in progress and that there is still more to do.

## **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Bread and Roses Integrated Arts School HS 685</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>	∅	✓	+
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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