



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Adrien Block School**

**Intermediate School 025**

**34-65 192nd Street  
Queens  
NY 11358**

**Principal: Joseph Catone**

**Dates of review: November 28 - 29, 2006**

**Reviewer: Amanda Whitehead**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Adrien Block Intermediate School occupies a large well-maintained building that it shares with two other schools. The school serves 870 students in 7th and 8th grade, most of who live in the immediate area. By 2007, the grade 9 facility will be phased out and the school will include grade 6 students.

The composition of the student body is 37.5% White, 38.5% Asian, 20.0% Hispanic and 4.0% Black. The current attendance rate is above 95%, higher than that of similar schools. The percentage of students recently arrived in the school is higher than that for similar schools but much the same as that for other City schools.

The school has a small percentage of special education students [5.11%]. The percentage of English language learners is 7.6%. The school is not Title 1 eligible.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Data is analyzed thoroughly and used very well to plan next steps for students of all abilities.
- The principal is a highly effective leader who has a clear vision for the school and shares it with other members of the school community.
- The collaboration throughout the school, at all levels, is well developed.
- Staff professionalism, support and care for each other are high.
- The curriculum is exciting and well differentiated.
- Pupil progress is carefully tracked.
- Behaviour is good and is well managed.
- There is a constant drive for improvement.

### What the school needs to improve

- Refine data analysis so that it includes evaluations of the comparative performance of different groups, particularly boys and Hispanic students.
- Consider different strategies to encourage active parent involvement.
- Continue to monitor the effectiveness of intervention strategies.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

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

The principal, teachers, students and parents all follow a consistent approach to providing a high quality education. This is evidenced through all processes and at all levels, from the analysis of data, to the strategies required in order to deliver differentiated instruction. All teachers are proficient at both delivering instruction and reviewing its educational impact.

Since his appointment, the principal has been very successful in sharing and maintaining this vision. Adrien Block School is a place where students, parents and staff feel valued and safe. Teachers clearly want, and are able, to provide the best opportunities for students and this is achieved through carefully differentiated instruction that is exciting and accessible to all. Data is used effectively to inform planning and to track the progress of all students, including special education students and English language learners. The quality of instruction is very high. Teachers and the principal are able to constantly monitor the effectiveness of instruction and make changes when necessary. Students know exactly what is expected of them and enjoy coming to school.

Collaboration throughout the school is apparent. Staff are happy to work together on elements of planning and to help individual students achieve. This is an area that parents greatly appreciate. In addition, and as a result of the above, communication throughout the school is very effective. Links to, and communication with, outside agencies has a clear impact on instructional quality.

The areas for improvement identified in this report are issues which the school has already identified and the principal has begun to consider ways of tackling them.

### **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 pre-planned assessments such as Kaplan for mathematics. The results of these assessments are used well in identifying focus groups of students and in planning interventions. The principal and all teachers use the assessments to provide a clear picture of where they need to target resources. Student performance data, which is particularly comprehensive in English language arts and mathematics, is tracked over the year on an individual student, class and grade-level basis. This data helps the school to build up a very clear picture, from the data, of the achievement of all including, special education students and English language learners. The data from these assessments is used constructively to help achieve student progress and to direct effective intervention strategies towards those students. For example, in an English language arts class, the teacher used the assessment focus for under-achieving students, which was clearly laid out in a file, and referred to this during the session in order

to establish progress. Despite this, the school knows that it is possible to refine its assessments more, for example in looking more closely at the reasons behind the comparatively lower performance of boys and Hispanic students.

In cases where comparative assessment data shows that results have dipped, such as those for 8th grade English language arts in 2005, the school is quick to look for the reason why and to quickly plan appropriate interventions.

Classroom teachers carry out ongoing qualitative assessment through questioning students in order to ascertain whether a skill has been achieved. Teachers make good use of assessment files, which provide suggested targets for what should be learned, and which are successful in helping students reach projected outcomes.

**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.**

Collaboration between the school leaders and between staff, parents and students is very effective. Challenging goals and targets are set which reflect the school’s high expectations, and these are communicated to all involved through the Comprehensive Educational Plan.

Student achievement and progress are monitored carefully, and this information is well used in identifying planned improvements across classes, grades and subjects. A particular strength is the degree to which the school uses assessment to identify, and then plan action for, its lowest achieving and special education students. Through the academic intervention service, other intervention programs and careful classroom differentiation, good attention is paid to maximizing their progress. Very clear targets for these students are set and shared effectively. However, assessments of the performance of boys and Hispanic students, two lower-performing groups, are less structured and this hampers the school in identifying developments which have the potential to meet their needs.

Because relationships throughout the school are good, there is a high degree of collaboration in setting and tracking whole-school and student goals. The school is characterized by a high degree of professionalism and staff readily attend meetings to discuss suggested changes in the curriculum and to translate this into their planning. Parents celebrate the high expectations that the school has of their children. They know exactly, through regular communication from the principal, where their children are academically and are encouraged to take part in helping them progress. Parent workshops are also provided to help achieve progress, and the school is seeking new ways of encouraging more parents to become involved with these.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The well-planned curriculum is closely aligned with mandated requirements. A good range of enrichment activities, such as music, makes a positive contribution to students' learning. In a similar way, schedules are planned to make the most of available time. A commendable feature within the school is that all staff meet regularly to plan and this is evident in cross-curricular planning where, for example, an English lesson may incorporate elements of the science curriculum.

The principal and all staff are very clear about what they need to teach to reach specific targets with individual students, groups of students and with each class. As a result, they are able to target the use of resources and budget appropriately. When it becomes clear that progress is not being made, teachers are confident about changing strategies and devising other ways of achieving an impact. Appropriate differentiation of instruction is provided to meet the needs of all students.

The principal frequently selects a weekly focus, often identified during a walk-through, review of data, or discussion with staff. Staff are made aware of that focus and plan it into their weekly schedule. This not only enables them to share an understanding of development strands within the school, but also supports their clear sense of accountability. The work that the paraprofessionals and special education teachers carry out supports this and this is due, in part, to the effective collaboration between all parties.

The school has well-developed structures for promoting the social and personal development of its students. For example, students know that they always have someone to turn to if they have concerns or worries.

As a result of the clear systems that are in place regarding absenteeism and lateness, attendance is above the average for similar schools.

**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 successfully sets and models high expectations and these are reflected by staff throughout the school. They all strive for excellence and it is clear that they share the same vision and understand precisely what they are aiming to achieve. Teachers adapt and amend teaching strategies, styles and plans in order to raise achievement. They consistently interpret and align instruction with information gained from student assessments, and are confident enough to try different styles to ensure that students are fully challenged. Staff are selected for their obvious commitment to teaching and their ability to continually evaluate their own performance and its impact on the progress of their students.

Professional development is given a high value and is well-planned in relation to information revealed by student data. Through careful monitoring and support, development is identified and provided. Staff are encouraged to access a wide variety of

appropriate professional development opportunities and are then keen to implement new ideas within their classroom teaching. Teachers confidently visit each other's classrooms to share ideas and strategies. The principal and the mathematics and literacy coaches regularly observe teaching and, together with the analysis of data and other monitoring activities, know staff capabilities and development needs well. These observations are well used in identifying professional development needs as well as in tracking the school's progress towards its goals. However, the school recognizes that more could be done to evaluate the impact of planned interventions and has begun to develop appropriate plans to address this issue.

The principal is well respected and has implemented clear systems to enable the school to run smoothly. There is strong collaboration between both administrative and teaching staff and systems are well understood. This level of teamwork is also evident in the joint planning that takes place. These meetings enable focused discussion of identified areas of need that have been identified through observations made by the principal, or through data analysis.

Good use is made of outside services in ensuring that students receive appropriate support.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.**

#### **This area of the school's work is well developed**

The Comprehensive Educational Plan is very focused and, because of the regular updates that are undertaken, is rightly regarded as a working document.

Comparisons of performance between classes and grades are regularly carried out, which helps the school to keep a clear overview of progress and enables it to modify its planning should the need be apparent. For example, appropriate data, which records achievement in reading, writing and speaking and listening is used to determine whether the strategies to aid progress are having an impact, or not. As a result, the school has a clear picture of its own effectiveness and of the progress that it is making in reaching its goals. This is a very successful school and through careful data analysis and targeted effective teaching, the intention is that achievement will remain high.

One of the school's strengths lies in its flexibility towards the curriculum and how it responds to the needs of individuals and groups of students. This makes a good contribution towards promoting an inclusive education for all students. The classroom resources that are used also complement the delivery of that curriculum and make it accessible to all students. A closer analysis of assessments of the performance of the lower-attaining groups has the potential to develop this aspect of the school's work even more strongly.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

|  |   |   |          |
|--|---|---|----------|
| <b>SCHOOL NAME: Adrien Block School (IS 025)</b> | ∅ | ✓ | +        |
| <b>Quality Score</b>                             |   |   | <b>X</b> |

|   |   |          |          |
|---|---|----------|----------|
| <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>                                 |   |          | <b>X</b> |
| 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> |   |          | <b>X</b> |
| 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>                       |   | <b>X</b> |          |
| 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.                  |   |          | <b>X</b> |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>  |   |          | <b>X</b> |

\* 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.  |   |   | <b>X</b> |
| 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.  |   |   | <b>X</b> |
| 2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.   |   |   | <b>X</b> |
| 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.      |   |   | <b>X</b> |
| 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.   |   |   | <b>X</b> |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>   |   |   | <b>X</b> |

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <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>   | Ø | ✓ | + |
| 3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.  |   |   | X |
| 3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.   |   |   | X |
| 3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.   |   |   | X |
| 3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.  |   |   | X |
| 3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.  |   |   | X |
| 3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.   |   |   | X |
| 3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.  |   |   | X |
| 3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.   |   | X |   |
| <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>   | Ø | ✓ | + |
| 4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.   |   |   | X |
| 4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap. |   |   | X |
| 4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.  |   |   | X |
| 4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.  |   |   | X |
| 4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.  |   |   | X |
| 4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.   |   |   | X |
| 4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.  |   |   | X |
| <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>   | Ø | ✓ | + |
| 5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.  |   |   | X |
| 5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.  |   | X |   |
| 5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.  |   |   | X |
| 5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.   |   |   | X |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>   |   |   | X |