



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Bayside School

Public School 31

**211 - 45 46 Road
Queens
NY 11361**

Principal: Terri Graybow

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Reviewer: Ted Solow

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 31 is located within a culturally diverse community in the Bayside area of northern Queens. The student population is composed of approximately 575 students in grades kindergarten through 5. The ethnic makeup of the school is 14.4 % Black, 19.1% Hispanic, 23% White, and 43.5% Asian and others. Almost 18.6% of the population is comprised of English language learners and 9% are special education students.

The attendance rate is 95.4% which is above similar schools throughout the City. The school does not receive Title 1 funding.

The school is utilized beyond its maximum capacity with the result that all available space has been turned into teaching areas, including closets and the loft which has been transformed into the computer center and speech class.

All classes throughout the school are heterogeneously grouped.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal demonstrates the qualities of a dynamic leader and fosters an atmosphere of collegiality.
- The principal focuses on teaching and learning within a school culture of high expectations for all students.
- The building is well maintained and the halls exhibit many examples of student work reflecting classroom activities.
- Procedures, policies and school rules contribute to an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- The warm and caring climate fostered by the staff is one of the reasons students want to go to this school as evidenced by the high rate of attendance.
- The principal is highly visible, caring, and supportive of teachers' classroom activities.
- The staff use English language arts and mathematics data to plan curriculum, recommend students for academic intervention and other services.
- Grade teams work collaboratively to produce optimal teaching and learning conditions for the students.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop the resources for and use of computer technology.
- Improve planning and preparation to differentiate learning opportunities and strategies, particularly for higher-achieving students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

In her four year tenure, the principal has developed a collaborative atmosphere where parents want their children to attend, where staff wants to work, and where students are encouraged and supported to become high achievers. Grade teams analyze data, make periodic assessments, review external and internal assessments and plan with the other service providers, to assist youngsters who are experiencing difficulties. The continuous use of data is what makes this school so special.

The spirit of cooperation and collaboration among all stakeholders results in a school where outstanding teaching and student learning are taking place in every classroom.

There are areas for improvement in this report. It is important to note that the principal is aware of these issues and has been planning with her leadership team to address them to make the school even more successful.

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 staff and the administration use the data extensively to monitor student progress. The school uses grade conferences and faculty meetings to review the results of City, State, and Princeton Review quarterly assessment tests in English language arts and mathematics to monitor student progress and to identify students who may require assistance. Students are assessed periodically in English language arts and mathematics, both formally and in class assessments. Teachers have individual conferences with each student to get a true picture of their understanding of newly taught concepts and principles and to review their progress to date. Findings are recorded in each teacher's journal through running records and annotations. Students also keep individual logs.

Struggling students are tracked by the pupil personnel team. The team analyzes data when reviewing requests for special services, such as the academic intervention service and services for English language learners. The principal has initiated a program that gradually introduces these services. Special care is taken through creative programming to support students with interventions which include Reading Recovery, Wilson reading, and after-school, small group instruction.

As a result of the clear picture that the analysis of data provides, and the actions the school takes based on it, the students at Public School 31Q consistently perform at a high level and achieve gains each year as compared with similar schools and other City-wide schools. Records are kept for each student from grades kindergarten through 5 which show the rates of student progress in English language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. A record is also kept to monitor any interventions that were used to assist

the student. These records are passed to the new teachers each June when new classes are organized. This results in every teacher having a clear picture of their future class that enables efficient planning of summer 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.

The school gathers and assesses data in English language arts, mathematics, social studies and science that directly affect student achievement. Each teacher is then able to set goals for their students and for themselves. Students are monitored during the course of the year by formal and classroom assessments to closely observe individual achievement. Through the classroom observation process, the principal and the assistant principal are active participants in this process.

Grade teams meet during common preparation periods or during lunch to plan and confer with other service providers (e.g., academic intervention services), English language arts and special education teachers to review progress and discuss effective teaching strategies. Any adjustment to a student’s program is always discussed with the parent or caregiver before being implemented. Parental input is viewed by the school as essential to making the educational process work.

The school has established procedures to identify students with the greatest need of improvement. Test scores and teacher referrals are used to determine the level of assistance needed to improve academic performance. All assessed students are monitored and reviewed by the service providers, classroom teachers, the pupil personnel team and the principal. As a result of this good instruction, lower-achieving and special education students make good progress, with well below average proportions of students achieving only level 1 in State tests. English language learners also make good progress, so that over the past few years the percentage of these students achieving English proficiency has risen significantly.

The parent coordinator informs parents about what is happening at the school. She is a highly visible and accessible member of this school community. Additionally, there is a very active and supportive parent teachers association.

One key to the success of this school is the collaboration among all teachers in each grade as well as the service providers, with combined support from the administration and the parents.

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 school is exempt from the mandated curriculum in reading and mathematics but it still correlates English language arts and mathematics instruction to meet and exceed State and City standards. The Teachers’ College reading and writing program is used

exclusively in all grades. Student progress is monitored by the teachers, the academic intervention services reading teacher and the Reading Recovery teacher, as well as the administration. The service providers use similar material so that there is continuity of instruction. Support for this program is provided by Teacher's College trainers who visit the school twenty times a year to provide professional development to the classroom teachers.

The workshop model is used by most teachers. This allows for large group instruction, small group instruction, and individual conferencing during the classroom period. Each grade team uses all data to make quality adjustments cooperatively in curriculum and in lesson planning. All curriculum materials developed by the teachers are shared with the service providers. In addition to the regular school day, students meet in small groups, everyday except Friday, to address their specific, subject-area needs. The school also has a Great Leaps program where specialized teachers meet with one student every morning for 20 minutes to focus on their weaknesses. The pupil personnel team carefully monitors the progress of these students. There is some differentiation of tasks, but this is not consistent. In particular, although classroom teachers try to address the needs of high achievers, this is not sufficiently well planned and implemented.

The school's resources are carefully managed, in a way that is responsive to teachers' knowledge of students' needs. For example, grade teams recommend specific texts that correspond to classroom instruction. The principal then reviews the budget and tries to honor most requests. However, parents and students cite the lack of modern technology. The principal is trying to address the problem by applying for legislative and City Council grants.

The students in this school are excited because they are exposed to a broad curriculum. Academic demands are tempered with programs in art, computers, dance, ballroom dancing and physical/fitness education. This daily mixture gives students an opportunity to relax from the academic rigors in the classroom, and to become more rounded individuals.

There is a culture of mutual respect, and students know they are well cared for and supported. They are happy to come to school. The attendance rate is approximately 96% which exceeds the rate in similar and Citywide schools. Despite the good rate, attendance is monitored daily and calls are made to the homes of absent students.

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 school has a dedicated, well-established staff which has blossomed under the principal's leadership. Each teacher understands the commitment to excellence in all phases of school life. Staff members support the efforts by working to achieve the best for the students they teach. During the principal's tenure there has been little turnover of staff. The leadership committee helps to select new teachers using the principal's vision of quality education for everyone.

Professional development opportunities are constrained by time limits. There are two professional development days during the year. All other professional development activities take place during monthly faculty meetings and during grade conferences. Teachers have input in selecting appropriate topics that will help them improve teaching

and learning strategies. Staff are released from school to attend conferences and seminars that address issues of interest. The information is shared at school meetings.

The principal and assistant principal use the formal evaluation process as a learning tool. Teachers discuss what they will teach prior to the observation and then review the findings after the class visit. All of these reviews are constructive, non-threatening and collegial. The administration fosters a policy of inter-class visitations among all staff members. These visits support the teaching and learning process well.

The principal is highly visible and visits each class two to three times each week. She is always available to parents, children and staff. She encourages risk-taking and supports new ideas. Decisions are always shared with the leadership committee. The open door policy of the principal encourages the flow of communication between parents, staff and students. The students are aware of what their principal does to create a safe and caring learning environment. The parents are delighted with the performance of the school as demonstrated by their support in maintaining a hall library and by funding many projects within the school. Every teacher receives a grant from the parent teacher association to support efforts in the classroom.

The principal has established effective partnerships with outside agencies to support the academic program. Some of these groups are: Early Stages, American Ballroom Theatre, The Bronx Zoo, The Daily News spelling bee, and The Alley Pond Environmental Center.

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.

This school does not stop trying to improve performance in all areas. The administrative team has established measures to check the performance by each grade and monitor individual student progress. The pupil personnel team meets with the principal to review the status of all at-risk youngsters who are receiving assistance. The results of periodic assessments are analyzed by the staff and the administrators to see if changes should be made in the curriculum. Each grade team and service providers review this data to monitor progress of individual students. However, assessments are just one tool available to the staff. Teachers are constantly revising their plans to meet the need of the students.

Grade, pupil personnel, school leadership, curriculum and administrative teams monitor student progress on a regular basis. For example, immediate analysis of the latest science exam indicated that a segment of the population was performing below other disaggregated groups. The administrative team is examining the curriculum to provide an appropriate response.

The Comprehensive Educational Plan indicates practices for periodic review of the school's goals. The plan outlines goals and objectives for the curriculum in all subject areas. The benchmarks of the plan are monitored on a regular basis for attainment of the anticipated goals. Periodic reviews of the interim benchmarks include immediate responses where necessary.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Bayside School [PS 31]	∅	✓	+
Quality Score			X

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 			X
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 			X
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			X
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			X
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.		X	
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.			X
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X