



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Brian Piccolo Middle School**

**Middle School 053  
1045 Nameoke Street  
Queens  
NY 11691**

**Principal: Claude Monereau**

**Dates of review: May 8 – 9, 2007**

**Reviewer: Peter Williman**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Brian Piccolo Middle School serves 772 students in grades 6 through 8. The population comprises 62% Black students, 33% Hispanic students, 2% White students, and 3 % Asian and other ethnic groups. Special education students represent just over 14% of the total school population while almost 10% of students are English language learners. The school receives Title 1 funding for 83% of students. This figure is in line with that of similar schools but well above the average for City schools. Attendance statistics for 2005 indicate that the school average attendance of 89% was in line with similar schools but below that of City schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is highly committed to the welfare and achievement of his students and works very hard to raise expectations and to drive school improvement.
- The school collects a relevant range of data and generally uses it effectively to understand the performance and progress of students.
- The principal has been proactive in hiring staff who have high expectations of students and who promote active learning.
- Coaches and the assistant principals perform their individual and collective responsibilities to a good standard and as a result what the school provides for students is continually developed.
- Faculty work cohesively within their departments and teams and through their care, hard work and commitment very largely support the goals of the school.
- Students enjoy school and are effectively engaged in their lessons because of some good quality instruction and the curriculum offered in class and after school.
- The school revises curriculum in response to a careful analysis of interim data and this promotes the achievement of its instructional goals.
- Teachers know their students well and are beginning to use a range of strategies to individualize learning, to encourage collaborative learning and to raise student awareness of their next steps effectively.
- Formal and informal professional development is effectively supporting the teachers' increasing understanding and use of data.
- The school is a caring community, which is valued by students and parents.

### What the school needs to improve

- Analyze data to compare the relative progress of students, classes and groups.
- Consolidate the understanding and confidence of all staff to use data effectively to set targets and to extend the methodologies for effective differentiated teaching and learning.
- Analyze data to give a longitudinal profile of the progress of specific groups of students and cohorts.
- Specify the goals, timeframes and monitoring systems within the Comprehensive Education Plan with greater clarity to facilitate easier and accessible review and to plan revision.
- Share best practice and develop greater consistency in class, grade and across school assessment and record keeping, in order to inform instruction and monitor progress.
- Consolidate and build on existing structures to raise the quality of programs and services for English language learners and for those students requiring intervention, to accelerate achievement.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

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

The Brian Piccolo Middle School has been transformed under the determined leadership of the principal to be a well-ordered, functional school committed to providing the best opportunities for its students. The school operates under the challenging circumstances of being the only non-application middle school in the locality and therefore may receive new students at any time. The school accepts these challenges and responds accordingly. Students now believe the school motto, 'Making the dream possible', is a reality.

The principal's capacity for hard work, his clear vision for students and his structured management strategies have been exemplary and, as a result, he has commanded overall support. A capable cohesive team comprising of the assistant principals, the coaches and the dean significantly strengthens his leadership. The very successful hiring strategy has revitalized the faculty who in the main share the vision to work collegially and to provide challenging, data-driven instruction in order to raise student achievement. The prime goals to create a safe, secure and physically attractive environment in which effective instruction can take place have been achieved. The leadership and faculty understand the value of data to set goals and inform instruction. They have begun to develop effective skills in data analysis and its application. The school does not yet use data effectively to focus strategic planning and review, to establish consistency in assessment and record keeping procedures, and to refine the monitoring of individual and student group progress over time. The evidence of the review confirms there is clear capacity and depth of leadership to achieve these further goals.

### How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.**

#### **This area of the school's work is proficient.**

The school collects a relevant range of data and generally uses it effectively to understand the performance and progress of all students. As a result, student achievements continue to rise. In addition to the data from State assessments, the administration, coaches and teachers generally take appropriate advantage of the regular Princeton Review data to track the progress of individual students, classes and grades in mathematics and English language arts. Teachers augment their knowledge of their students effectively through observation, portfolios of student work and classroom-generated assessments. The school's assessment program, combined with the work of the language and academic intervention team and the guidance counselors, ensures appropriate monitoring of the progress of English language learners and special education students. The school is flexible in its arrangements to identify higher achieving students as a specific group and to monitor their progress in accelerated learning classes. For example a student was transferred to such a class late in grade 7 because of the evidence of her significant progress.

The school does not analyze data in sufficient depth to investigate and compare the progress of other specific groups. The progress of ethnic groups and groups within those populations are not carefully reviewed. Data is not sufficiently analyzed to reveal the progress of students relative to their time in school, relative to their achievement on entry and relative to other schools. This is significant in a school that has cohorts of students entering at two grades and a mobile student population. As a result, although the school monitors its overall performance in subjects, it does not coordinate data sufficiently well to compare the progress of students individually and in grades and cohorts, in order to measure the impact of its work objectively.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The principal has engaged the full range of school stakeholders effectively to formulate the Comprehensive Education Plan. In this and the principal’s objectives document, strategic goals are concisely stated for the longer term. However, the success criteria are either arbitrary figures, absent or insufficiently precise to measure objectively the progress and the impact of the plans. In the short and medium term, the coaches lead the work of class teachers and grade teams well to identify very clear goals based upon well-analyzed data, particularly from the Princeton Review assessments. Most teachers are gaining confidence to access computer-based data to identify students’ next steps in learning. As a result student progress and the progress of plans and achievement in mathematics and English language arts are effectively monitored and measured. Plans in both subjects have clear timeframes.

The work of the academic intervention team and the school counselors enables the setting of effective objectives for special education students and English language learners. The school recognizes that because of the range and complexity of the needs of the English language learners it is currently enrolling, the extensive and generally effective planning of school and the after school and Saturday support is not, as yet in line with the school’s assessments.

Students and their parents welcome the high expectations that the principal has introduced because they recognize the benefits to students’ learning. As a result, teachers are able to teach and students are gaining a greater sense of responsibility and awareness of what is required to raise their achievement. As one student commented, ‘it’s better now because we can get on with our work.’ The principal’s open door policy and increased involvement of parents provide more opportunities to share understandings of the school’s work.

A strength of the school is the good communication between the administration, the coaches and the dean. This extends to the collegial work within the grade and subject teams. As a result, there is a shared understanding of plans and goals at the varying levels, including parents and students, and this has assisted the pace of progress of the school’s regeneration as an effective entity. However, a small number of teachers do not share totally the commitment to new procedures.

**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 plans its curriculum appropriately in line with State standards. Effective use is made of the selected programs for English language arts and mathematics to inform teachers of student progress. For example the program, Reading 180, provides good quality information regarding reading progress, particularly of lower achieving students.

The administration and coaches hold teachers to account for the quality of their instruction through regular review meetings, informal observations and, specifically in English language arts, through monitoring instructional progress against the curriculum map. Teachers overall make effective use of assessment and observational data to plan lessons and to match students to appropriate instructional groups within the workshop model of differentiation. This was especially the case in a mathematics lesson where all students were observed to be on task at their level based upon assessment data. However, this practice, although a regular feature of teachers more recently hired, is not consistent or fully implemented across all classes and, as a result, some students do not always work at an appropriate level of challenge.

Budget and logistical decisions reflect the knowledge of students’ progress and needs appropriately. The school has opted to fund the 21<sup>st</sup> Century after school program, which particularly benefits English language learners. The school has hired an attendance coordinator and as a result attendance is beginning to rise. Rescheduling literacy into ninety-minute time blocks has impacted positively upon teachers’ opportunity to implement reading programs and strategies more effectively.

Curriculum programs are used well by most teachers to engage students in lively interactive lessons. Students appreciate the support, respect and individual care they receive in lessons and are confident that adults will listen and help if they are in situations of academic or personal need. Students enjoy their lessons and this encourages good attendance, which is a high priority of the school. Response to lateness and absence is responded to with a no tolerance policy and this is seen to work.

**Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The principal’s commitment to high expectations and to drive the performance of students to higher levels is well illustrated through his hiring and staff structuring policies. As a result the school has a very good quality administration and subject coaches to lead the instructional work. New teachers demonstrate they are flexible to adopt and adapt the school’s policies for data-driven instruction and this is beginning to be embedded well into their work.

Professional development has been focused appropriately to enable faculty to understand student progress and next steps in student learning through the increased use of the Princeton Review program and data. This has resulted from the school’s determination to raise the achievement of level 1 and 2 students and is beginning to demonstrate clear improvements. Every week, coaches and the assistant principals provide focused ongoing

professional development to both individual teachers and to grade teams through assisting in planning lessons that respond to data analysis. Teachers make good use of opportunities to share their practice and observe each other but this is not a systematic or formal process.

The principal knows his teaching teams' strengths and needs very well. He illustrates his expectations through regular informal walkthroughs of the school, commentary to teachers and by personal teaching demonstrations. His keen observation and determination to provide the best instructional opportunities for the students has resulted in a significantly regenerated and restructured staff. As a result, students, staff and parents agree the school has undergone very positive changes. They respect the principal's skills and style and recognize the personal sacrifices he has made to bring the school to its current secure position. Although there are some occasional behavioral issues by a small number of students, these are quickly and effectively tackled and the day-to-day school routines are managed well. Students emphasize they feel safe and happy as a result.

Teachers generally work well in their teams and there is effective communication between leaders and faculty, which leads to flexibility in planning and an improved responsiveness to students' needs. The academic work of teachers is effectively complemented by the after school organizations which provide athletic and learning activity programs. The input of the Police Athletics League, for example has provided students with valuable leadership towards constructive engagement in sports.

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

**This area of the school's work is undeveloped.**

Whole school strategic plans have focused upon regenerating the school to be a viable place for learning. However, although the school has assessments to map student progress, it has not been a priority to integrate these formally into school plans as a means to identify progress in achieving the goals outlined within. Although the school has significant and extensive plans to reorganize the school into three academies to raise achievement, the associated setting of interim goals and assessments to monitor the progress and impact of this initiative is not, as yet, in place. However, this initiative does demonstrate the school's capability to plan successively and flexibly in response to the impact of their previous plans. As a result, subsequent goals should build on each year's evaluation and review.

The comparison of student data as a means of measuring the progress of plans is not an established review practice. However, teachers do compare their students informally to identify the impact of short-term planning. Goals and programs are adjusted and realigned when necessary. The principal and his leadership team do revise plans appropriately. For example, plans were revised and better services were provided to lower achieving students which has had a clear impact on the students.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Brian Piccolo School (MS 53)</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		