



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Edward Bleeker Junior High School

Junior High School 185

**147-26 25 Drive
Queens
NY 11354**

Principal: Valerie Sawinski

Dates of review: November 28 - December 1, 2006

Reviewer: Cheryl Baker

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Edward Bleeker Junior High School serves 809 students in grades seven, eight, and nine, a drop of 63 students from the 2005-2006 school year. Asian students represent 44.7% of the student body, Hispanics, 32.1%; White, 17.8%; and Black, 5.9%. Twelve percent are English language learners and 6% are special education students. For the period 2003-2005, recent immigrants accounted for an average of 14.8% of the population. The school is eligible for Title I funding.

Attendance for the 2003-2005 school years averaged just over 93%, exceeding that of similar and City-wide schools. Suspensions for that period averaged 89, exceeding those of similar schools by 57 students. Student performance on State and City tests for the period 2003-2005 was on par with similar schools and exceeded City-wide schools in English language arts. In mathematics and science, the school outperformed similar and City-wide schools. Fewer of the school's special education students scored at level 1 in English and mathematics as compared to similar and City-wide schools. The school's English language learners performed on par with similar and City-wide schools in English language arts and exceeded others in mathematics.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Provides informed, focused leadership for using data to improve instruction.
- Ensures that goals and action plans reflect a broad understanding of the needs of the school and its students and are widely understood by administrators, teachers and parents.
- Sets clear expectations for teachers in the delivery of instruction and their responsibility to participate in the life of the school.
- Provides high quality professional development that supports teachers and administrators in their growth as educators.
- Provides specialized programs and interventions to address the broad spectrum of students' learning needs.
- Engenders collaborative problem solving and empowers teachers to share in the leadership and decision making in the school.
- Demonstrates annual increases in student performance as measured by State and City tests.
- Works collaboratively with an active parent organization.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to provide professional development in the analysis of assessment and other pertinent data, as available, to help teachers gain deeper knowledge of what each student knows and is able to do, and where they need additional support.
- Continue to provide teachers with professional development in techniques that will help them to successfully differentiate instruction to improve the achievement of each student.
- Continue to infuse reading and writing across the curriculum.
- Strategize with stakeholders and potential partners to devise mechanisms to support increased academic, athletic and artistic enrichment opportunities outside of the regular school day.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

The principal leads collaboratively and deliberately. She has successfully focused the school on the use of all available data to inform decisions for the school and its children. Planning is data driven and plans are responsive to needs for revision as they arise. Curriculum is regularly revised to address instructional needs and instruction is increasingly differentiated. Staff regularly avail themselves of professional development opportunities and are rewarded through recognition and improved student performance.

At the close of the 2006-2007 school year the school will transition from grades seven through nine junior high school to grades six through eight middle school. The school hopes to capitalize on this transformation by being designated a magnet school for science and technology.

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's administrators and teachers regularly access and analyze the data available through State and City tests, Princeton Review interim assessments, item skills analysis, Grow reports, and the Gains and Loss report to understand the performance and progress of all students. Additionally, data gained through the Wilson reading program's assessments, the developmental reading assessment and the Rewards program pre-tests is used to provide discrete data regarding students' reading skills. Portfolios of students work in the core tested areas inform teachers understanding of their students' ability to demonstrate knowledge. Teachers and administrators display a sound grasp of the progress of students at the classroom and grade level.

The progress of English language learners and special education students is monitored as per regulations. Informal formative assessments of these students supplements teachers' understanding of their progress. The school also analyses standardized test data to understand the relative progress of its students by ethnicity and gender and is crafting mechanisms to address inequities in performance.

The school is very aware of its progress relative to neighboring junior high schools and strives to out-perform its competitors. The 2006 mathematics results which ranked the schools students second in the district is a great source of pride for all constituencies. In addition to comparative analysis among students, classrooms, grade levels and cohorts, the school also monitors performance in all academic areas to determine needs for curricular adjustment.

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 leadership team collaborates to determine the needs of the school and drafts the Comprehensive Education Plan in the spring prior to the plan’s operational data. The plan is adjusted and finalized in September of the operational year and its progress is reviewed monthly. Mid year adjustments are made if conditions warrant change. The plan’s goals and timelines are understood by all constituencies and are integral to the actions undertaken to achieve annual improvement. The principal’s annual goals reflect those of the Comprehensive Education Plan. Teachers also develop annual goals that are required to reflect school wide goals.

The school also crafts plans for groups that have been identified as a particular focus area. For example, students identified for the extended day program are assigned to programs specifically targeted at their individual weaknesses and their progress and participation are tracked on a daily basis. Curriculum plans reflect changes the sequencing or pacing of instruction based upon changes in state testing. Student’s individual education plans reflect changes in their needs and programmatic changes such as placement in the least restrictive instructional environments.

The school’s academic intervention team is structured to include a broad array of teachers who individualize interventions for any student whose performance or behavior indicates that he or she may be at risk. Plans are developed for each individual and progress is monitored and reviewed on a monthly basis. Approximately 12% of the schools students receive academic intervention services. The school’s period 9, its extended day program, is differentiated programmatically and serves approximately 50% of the school’s students. English language learners and special education students receive specialized extended day services that supplement their daily instruction.

The school holds high expectations for student performance. Parents express confidence in the school’s program and leadership and feel welcome in the school. Parents and students receive communication and assistance with high school applications, academic problems and other issues related to student progress. The school reaches out to parent and caregivers through evening programs, mailings and, in special cases, home visits.

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’s curriculum reflects City mandates and state standards. Current realignment of the sequence of mathematics topics is being undertaken reflect tested concepts. Social studies and science curricula are being rewritten to better reflect state standards. Analysis of student progress in English language arts led to the adoption of the Rewards program which provides explicit lessons and assessments in reading comprehension across the content areas. This program has been incorporated into mathematics, social studies and science as well as English language arts instruction.

Teachers are held accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes through frequent observations of their teaching, analysis of their student's progress and attainment of their annual goals. They are expected to differentiate their instruction based on their understanding of individual student's needs, their individual education plans, academic intervention services plan or their level of English language acquisition. For the most part, differentiation in the school takes the form of grouping by ability, with the expectation that groups are readjusted based on assessments of student progress. Instruction, especially in those classes where teachers craft lessons around individual students needs, is engaging.

All decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data, including those regarding budget, staffing and scheduling. A recent example is the formation of 'triad' classes based on the analysis of level 1 and 2 English language arts scores and mathematics scores. It was determined that students at these levels needed the opportunity for more individual instruction in the classroom which led to the rescheduling of students from two heterogeneously grouped classes of 30 students to three homogeneously grouped classes with 20 students each.

Attendance at the school is routinely above 93% and is monitored daily for both the regular day and the extended day program. Calls and letters to parents communicate concern with attendance. Home visits are made in cases of problematic attendance and good attendance is rewarded at the individual and class level.

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 is highly respected by teachers, students, parents and her fellow leaders. The active pursuit of professional growth for herself, her colleagues and her staff has fostered a high level of understanding of current pedagogy and practice within the school and supports the schools capacity to ensure continued improvement. Collaborative decision making takes place at all levels in the school and is a distinctive feature of the governance structure at Junior High School 185. The school is well run and orderly, providing a supportive context for teaching and learning.

The principal, assistant principals, coaches, and consultants frequently visit classrooms to observe instruction and provide suggestions for instructional improvement. 'Walk-throughs' are conducted routinely using a protocol that includes feedback to teachers. Teachers are encouraged to visit colleague' classrooms to observe the demonstration of techniques learned through participation in professional development workshops.

The school provides professional development through coaching, lunch conferences, academic department conferences, and supports attendance at regional workshops and university courses. The analysis of student data, results of classroom observations, needs of individual teachers and current initiatives set forth by the City and region inform the focus of professional development. Increasingly, teachers are provided training in the analysis and use of data and techniques for differentiating instruction.

While the school does have many partnerships with institutions of higher learning, museums and funding organizations, it lacks partnerships with youth development and support services groups that might serve to increase student access to enrichment activities that could supplement the academic program.

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.

While the Comprehensive Education Plan, the principal's annual goals and teacher's annual goals do not specify frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments, progress in attaining goals is reviewed with regularity. Teacher's progress in adhering to pacing guides for academic instruction is monitored routinely.

Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms on interim assessments such as the Princeton review, the developmental reading assessment, and assessments embedded in the Wilson reading and Rewards programs are used to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum and these interventions. Interim progress reports of student performance alert parents and administrators to needs for interventions in or adjustment of students' instructional program.

Students in the English language learners and special education programs receive routine assessment of their progress. Their programs are adjusted based on their achievement or continued needs. Students with personal intervention or academic intervention services plans are monitored and assessed by classroom teachers and intervention specialists. Their progress is discussed by the academic intervention team on a monthly basis and their plans are modified to reflect their progress.

The institution practices an analytical approach to understanding every aspect of its functioning and collaboratively sets goals and creates plans for achieving those goals. Measurement, review and revision of plans and goals are commonplace and realignment of practices and resources to achieve academic outcomes is routine. The development of triad classes, the reading across the curriculum initiative and the continuing evolution of plans for the schools transition to a middle school are but a few examples.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Edward Bleeker (JHS 185)	∅	✓	+
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.	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
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.	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	
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.	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
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X