



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Beach Channel High School

Public School 410

**100-00 Beach Channel Drive
Queens
NY 11694**

Principal: David Morris

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Reviewer: Paul Cosway

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Beach Channel High School is an established school, in its thirty third year, with 2046 students from grade 9 through 12. The school's population includes 54% Black, 29% Hispanic, 13% White and 4% Asian students. There is a higher proportion of special education students than in similar and City schools. The proportion of students entitled to Title 1 funding, at almost 100%, is higher than in City schools and well above the average for similar schools. Approximately 4% of students are English language learners and this is below the average for similar and City schools. The number of students recently arrived to the country is lower than in most City schools. Student attendance, at 75%, is below that in similar and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- There is a clear vision for the development of the school, driven by data, which has resulted in many improvements.
- The analysis of data is used to improve student performance.
- The principal is highly respected, has a good understanding of the usefulness of data and is using it to monitor and review the work of the school.
- There are clear priorities for improvement, arising from careful analysis of data.
- Data is used well to identify and support students in greatest need of improvement.
- The recently created small learning communities ensure teachers know their students well and use the data well to help them to improve their work.
- Many students have positive attitudes towards school and respect their teachers.
- The principal, with his school cabinet, has built a smooth running school with an increasingly stable staff.
- There are sound systems for teachers to share and benefit from each other's planning and teaching strategies.
- Students feel safe, trust their teachers and feel that there is always an adult they can turn to for help.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to improve attendance.
- Use interim reviews of students' progress to revise and modify plans and set new goals.
- Improve instruction by improving teachers' skills at using data to differentiate work to meet the needs of all learners in the same class.
- Continue to modify instruction as a result of the review of data to ensure that it is motivating and engaging students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The school is meeting its aims to give students the tools they need to in order to shape their futures. It seeks to turn its students into goal-oriented adults, with the help and the involvement of the whole family and community. and to offer a flexible curriculum, responsive to the needs of its students. It offers a very wide range of courses, ranging from oceanography to dance. Many students have the chance to begin college courses while still in high school. To help it meet its aims, the school makes good use of data and realizes its importance in all aspects of the school's work. The principal uses the available data well to lead the monitoring and review of the school's effectiveness. He deduced that students would benefit from being placed in smaller learning communities, so that they would be known well by a small group of dedicated staff, who could use the assessment data and personal data on each student to guide and support them effectively. As a result the school has been divided into four smaller schools, each headed by an assistant principal. This has had a positive effect, especially with the youngest students, whose discipline and attendance have improved significantly compared with similar cohorts from earlier years.

The school uses its own periodic assessments effectively to measure students' progress towards Regents exams. It analyzes the results and puts interventions in place to support those who need additional help.. For example, when assessment data showed that literacy problems were causing some students to fail, because they could not understand the questions they were asked, a raft of improvements was put in place. Professional development was organized to guide teachers. In many classes a special education teacher works alongside the class teacher to give literacy support. Initial data suggests that literacy levels are rising as a result.

The principal has a good understanding of the needs of the students and the community. He has high expectations of the students and the staff. He makes use of similar school comparisons to show them they are doing well compared with other schools, but also that some schools are doing better. There are good systems for monitoring and supporting special education students. Their needs are analyzed and recognized and good support given on a personal as well as academic front. In classes, however, not all students' needs are met. Teachers are not always ensuring that the work they plan meets the needs of all the students in their class. The greatest problem facing the school is attendance. This is well below the City average. The school is doing much to address the issue, including rewards for good attendance and calling parents, but it is slow to improve. Those students who are frequently absent are failing their courses, despite well-planned credit recovery programs.

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.

A wide range of formal and informal systems is used to gather data on students' academic and personal development. The school makes good use of its own, regular tests as well as State tests to measure the progress made by individuals, classes and grades. Achievement is rising as a result. Regular reviews led by the school cabinet make use of all available data and enable school leaders to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning. The assistant principals have overall responsibility for the performance of subject areas and the mini-learning communities. These groups are small enough for the teachers and leaders to have a close personal knowledge of the students in their care as well as access to a full range of performance data.

The school closely analyzes assessment data by ethnic groupings. Data shows little difference in performance. The school does not monitor progress by gender, but it is aware that boys perform slightly less well than girls and there are intervention programs to support boys' achievement. It tracks the progress of special education students and English language learners, and uses this data well to support their learning. At present, the group of special interest to the school is those with poor attendance. Their absences are monitored daily and are followed up rigorously in order to try to get them back into school. Data has shown a very close relationship between good attendance and success in the Regents exam.

Over thirty similar schools have been identified for comparison and results are compared and shared with staff. These comparisons are used effectively to raise staff's aspirations for their students. The school also makes comparisons with its own past performance, in order to measure its progress. The principal expects year by year improvement and sets goals accordingly. Similarly, comparisons are made between students, classes, grade levels and academic subjects to monitor their progress and effectiveness over time.

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 school leadership team meets regularly to set goals for the coming year and monitors progress towards them. The school cabinet meets daily to respond immediately to issues as they arise. The assistant principals meet in grade, learning community or subject teams to review results and set new goals based on data. These meetings focus on each student, classroom and grade level and result in plans being implemented to raise achievement. However, the school is not yet regularly setting short-term goals. Where data shows that students are underperforming, teachers are not setting short-term targets for a percentage improvement in results before the next review.

Where particular students are causing concern because assessment data and staff's informal monitoring show underperformance, a meeting is called of the staff most closely involved with the student. They consider academic data as well as all they know of the students' backgrounds, and draw up meaningful plans of action. These are reviewed regularly and these systems are well developed in the school. This holistic approach has led to improved results with some students, and students move in and out of this group as a result. However, where poor attendance is the main factor contributing to underperformance, improvement has proved hard to sustain.

Parents and students are aware of the school's high expectations. All staff know of their accountability for student performance and are driven to greater efforts, understanding the high expectations that the school, students and parents have of them. Parents and caregivers are invited into the school on a number of occasions during the year and receive regular progress reports. The teachers discuss progress with them and make clear the steps needed for the student to reach the next level. In the case of high absences, the attendance teachers and the four paraprofessionals involved in monitoring attendance call parents, visit families and work hard to try to resolve the problem. Some families give the school little support even though they are fully aware of the school's expectations. There have been improvements in grade 9 attendance, which has increased to between 80% and 90% across the learning communities, but overall absence is high, at almost a third of all students.

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 curriculum takes full account of the need to prepare the students for the mandatory tests that they take. Regular tests check on students' progress; the curriculum is organized so that mock Regents exams can be set regularly. In addition, the teachers in charge of subjects have freedom to choose the materials, the order in which they tackle them and the amount of time they give to each aspect in order to help students learn. In English language arts, for example, teachers change the texts that are studied if they prove too demanding for the students. Moving from 'Lord of the Flies' to 'Night' as a class text resulted in better grades for the students, because it was less demanding. Students are not engaged by the instruction in every class, however. They identified the shortage of participative, hands-on activities in classes as a major cause of disaffection.

Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. Their results are monitored and reviewed regularly by assistant principals and if necessary they have interviews with the principal. Data is used to monitor the performance of each class and each teacher. The school has identified differentiation as a priority for development. There has been some professional development to make teachers aware of the school's expectations, but not all are modifying their teaching to ensure that groups of students are given appropriately challenging work. In some classes, teachers have support systems in place to help weaker students. In many classes, there are two teachers in the room, one being a push-in teacher to help students who are having difficulties. The tasks themselves are rarely differentiated. This aspect of the school's work is undeveloped.

Budget decisions relate to the priorities arising from the study of data. For example, extra resources have been put into increasing attendance. Staff are appointed and assigned to meet the identified needs of students and the schedules are adjusted when appropriate to improve the effectiveness of the curriculum. Students are entered for some Regents exams early, in grades 9 and 10, to increase their motivation. This has been successful and has led to improved results. However, not all the current instructional programs are sufficiently engaging.

Staff know and respect students and most respond to their academic needs. Most students speak well of the staff and know that they have their best interests at heart. The students interviewed agreed unanimously that there are many adults on the staff they can trust.

Attendance is the highest priority for the school at the moment and the staff is working hard to increase attendance.

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 has chosen his staff carefully to ensure that they are in tune with its aims and have high expectations, based on a clear understanding of assessment data. When he was appointed four years ago it was difficult to recruit and the school was losing almost a third of its staff each year. He has raised morale and now has a stable staff. As part of the selection process, they have to demonstrate high expectations and strong subject knowledge. Then, professional development ensures that they develop a strong focus on student outcomes and are able to analyze the outcomes of assessment. Student, class, grade and teacher performance are monitored carefully and compared. Professional development is linked closely to the outcomes of data analysis and to the aims of the school. An example of this is this is the focus on literacy that arose from study of the errors students made on Regents papers. There are opportunities for teachers to observe each other and to discuss their work in grade and subject teams, learning from each other's successes and failures.

The principal is highly respected by everyone in the school. He and his assistant principals visit classes regularly to monitor teaching and learning. There are between four and six formal visits a year to each teacher and many informal walkthroughs. The frequency of these for any single teacher will relate to what is revealed by student performance data. Teachers meet in subject and learning community teams to discuss test results. They analyze these, looking for patterns, and where weaknesses are identified seek to modify teaching methods accordingly.

The school runs smoothly. Outside agencies are used well to support students. There are academic links with the Academy of Finance and Queensborough Community College which enhance academic courses. There is useful intervention from counseling services, mediation services and Partnership with Children.

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 proficient.

School planning, including the Comprehensive Education Plan, has clear and ambitious goals and these are regularly visited by the principal, the leadership team and teaching teams to measure the school's performance. Interim results are analyzed carefully to detect trends and where there is evidence of underperformance, swift action is taken. One of the small learning communities has been under threat of dissolution because it has not shown improved results. The interim reviews, however, do not lead to new, short-term targets being set. This is making success more difficult to measure because there are not explicit, manageable, success criteria. This aspect is undeveloped and the school is planning to redress this.

Comparisons are made of the relative effectiveness of class teachers. The results of their students are analyzed by class and low performance is investigated and remedial action taken. The school also tracks cohorts as they move through the school. The assistant principals interview all staff and use data as a central focus in these professional dialogues at least annually and often more frequently. The information that comes out of these interviews, along with the data, results in plans being immediately revised to try to ensure that teaching is as effective as possible. The move to collaborative classes, where the teacher is supported by a special education teacher, is an example of the extensive revisions that have stemmed from these reviews. Data suggested that students needed more support in class and changing the pull-out to a push-in model has improved students' performance. All such plans are checked every marking period to test their effectiveness and plans revised again in the light of these reviews.

The use of interim data to monitor the school's effectiveness is established at a whole school level and is developing within the smaller learning communities. Each plan's outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting, resulting in constructive changes to the school structure, curriculum or teaching practices. The most noticeable success has been in grade 9. Concern over the number of absences, suspensions and test failures in grade 9, for example, led to a whole series of changes focused on their attendance and groupings, which have led to significant improvements, followed by further reviews and modifications.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Beach Channel High School (HS 410)	∅	✓	+
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	