



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

John Bowne High School

**High School 425
63-25 Main Street
Queens
NY 11367**

Principal: Howard Kwait

**Dates of review: December 4 - 5, 2006
Reviewer: Ken Bryan and Rodney Braithwaite**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

John Bowne High School is a large multicultural community consisting of 3340 students from grades 9 through 12. Just over 45% of the students are Hispanic, 21% are Black and 6% are White, with small proportions of other groups. The school has 5.5% special education students. Twenty-four percent of the students are English language learners and approximately 50 languages are spoken. In 2005, over 17% of the students were recent arrivals in the United States from countries such as China, Ecuador and India. The school is Title 1 eligible. The most recent attendance figure of 80% is lower than City school averages and is down on last year's school average.

The school has had six principals in the past ten years. The current principal has been in post since August 2006.

John Bowne High School has the only agricultural program within the New York City Department of Education with a farm facility at the rear of the school and dedicated classrooms in the main building. The school also benefits from two other education options; the center for writing and the Doshi science research program. There is also a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides clear, energetic and effective leadership.
- Staff gather data effectively to inform planning for the consistent monitoring of the progress and learning of all groups of students.
- School staff know their students well and have high expectations for their academic and personal development.
- The school's three education options, the agriculture program, the center for writing and the Doshi science research program, are successful additional initiatives.
- The school provides many enrichment opportunities and strong partnerships with outside bodies in order to enhance wider curricular goals.
- The school is a safe, orderly, calm and respectful learning community.

What the school needs to improve

- Plan a program of professional development to train teachers to use differentiation more effectively in their planning for the needs of individual students.
- Instigate more rigorous methods in order to improve attendance, especially short-term absence, and encourage greater parental cooperation in ensuring that their children are regular attenders.
- Move towards increased inter-visitation and common planning time for collaborative meetings to allow for more effective sharing of practice between teachers.
- Set challenging targets for English language learners and improve instructional programs to narrow the differential in achievement compared with English proficient students.
- Investigate initiatives in raising extra finance and in taking budget decisions in order that identified deficiencies in resources, e.g. in technology, can be remedied.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

John Bowne High School is a school in transition. Through the clear leadership provided by the principal and his senior team and the professionalism and dedication of the faculty, the school is moving forward. The school sets high expectations for students' academic and personal development, by the use of targeted assessments and by knowing the individual needs of the students. The school's provision of additional programs, for example, the many after-school activities and extended day classes, ensures the students are given many enrichment opportunities. The school has been successful in raising achievement for special education students.

The school's accommodation, consisting of a main building and the agricultural program center, is well organized and stimulating. Although the school's capacity is about 118%, there is little evidence of overcrowding.

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.

John Bowne High School generates a wide range of assessment data and it effectively uses the information to inform student progress. The analysis of Regents cohort competency data enables the staff to evaluate the progress of students within each accountability sub-group. This is also used to compare the school with other local high schools. The data provided by the three marking points within the annual cycle is analyzed rigorously to identify trends and to demonstrate achievement. This is also an effective tool to make an objective analysis of performance over time and by subject.

The compilation of student transcripts is a valuable means of tracking achievement and logging intervention. This is a well-developed aspect of the school. The ethnic census report is a good example of data analysis used to objectively compare sub-group progress. Another example of this rigor is the way in which special education students are tracked effectively through the analysis of the tri-annual data, personal portfolios, reading and mathematics tests, phonic analyses and team conferencing. The consequence of this is the formulation of well-targeted individual education intervention programs involving multi-agency support and the parents.

The school generates scholarship reports to demonstrate the achievement of all students by subject and by grade. These are effectively analyzed as the data drives professional development and the design of instructional programs. The school's use of its own assessments and the use of external tests, such as Collegeboard, is a strong feature. The needs of higher-achieving students are well met through the robust use of student data. However, the majority of assessment data comes from test results. There is less use of diagnostic or formative testing of student achievement in the classroom.

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 with well-developed features.

The faculty and school leaders work very collaboratively and have high expectations. Departmental leaders set challenging targets for student achievement and progress towards them is tracked effectively. Data from the Regents competency tests is used effectively to inform decisions about individual students’ programs and levels of intervention. Also, as freshmen arrive in the school a wide range of assessments is employed to determine need. A counselor is assigned to each student to discuss each program.

The analysis of disaggregated data is now being used proficiently to identify those student groups in greatest need of improvement. Academic intervention programs set goals and the personal guidance program has been particularly successful with its annualization (a stable and consistent program for at risk learners) and the Bowne leadership initiatives to target improvements in the graduation rate which now stands at 60%. Programs for English language learners are yet effective in ensuring that these students reach proficiency in English quickly enough.

Parents and caregivers are kept informed about the progress of their children. There are effective lines of communication with the home. Students, teachers, parents and caregivers share in the target-setting process. Different marking periods are able to generate data to inform this process.

The school is working towards consistency across the different departments with regard to the setting of goals. The scholastic report is an effective comparative tool for determining departmental objectives and the school sees it as a key area for improvement

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 aligns itself with the mandated State and City curriculum. It is moving towards greater flexibility through the introduction of more creative instructional programs e.g. in science and in social studies. There is a developing culture amongst the faculty to design student-focused programs in terms of scope and sequence to take into account prior knowledge. The school’s three education options, the agriculture program, the center for writing and the Doshi science research program, are successful additional initiatives which help to motivate and engage students.

Teachers feel they are accountable for improving the instruction and raising achievement. Differentiation in the classrooms is not well developed. Most teachers do not plan differentiated tasks effectively and therefore require further professional development in this area. There is clear evidence of engagement in the classroom. Despite some inconsistency, classes are often exciting and actively stimulate the learners regardless of their levels of achievement.

Budgeting decisions do not fully take into account resource needs. An example of this is the lack of additional technology resources, both for students' learning and teachers' administration and instruction. The school has not sought additional funding for the extra technology through the grant aid process. The strategic management of the school's departmental budgets is not linked to the Comprehensive Education Plan.

The school's capacity to analyze assessment data to inform the scheduling of classes is developing. The principal has recently analyzed the daily and weekly programs to identify limitations for learning and ultimately graduation, for English language learners and special education students. With the support of the staff, he is beginning to modify the instruction schedules.

The levels of student absence are higher than City school averages and are increasing. The school as yet does not address the numbers of absences by focusing upon the students who are absent for less than four consecutive days, though it responds well to first day of absence and students are challenged when absent for longer periods. The parents, however, at present do not cooperate very fully in this process.

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 with well-developed features

The principal was appointed in August 2006. He has inherited many of the staff and he is developing their capacity to adopt new strategies with regard to classroom instruction and the use of data. The staff have responded well to the many initiatives instigated this semester and as a result there is a developing culture of collaboration with regard to sharing practice and embracing new instructional methodologies.

The principal and department leaders frequently observe teachers in the classroom. In the form of informal walkthroughs, the principal plays an active part in the monitoring of the quality of instruction. In addition, the monitoring by the department leaders is effective and the pair/share peer-observation system is developing. The school is moving towards increased intervisitation to provide professional development feedback, but this is not yet fully established. The use of data underpins this. The scholastic report for all programs is a powerful tool for initiating change as the school seeks to improve consistency and to set priorities. The school is developing the use of common planning time for collaborative meetings. The teachers have expressed the need for an increase in the available time to allow for more effective sharing of practice.

The role of the principal is central to the school's capacity to improve. All stakeholders actively support the principal and respect his levels of energy, his hands-on approach, his presence around the school and his vision for the school. The teachers have commented about his data-driven approach to school improvement. This is a significant strength of the school as it objectively focuses upon the needs of the students and staff.

The school is actively developing its links with the local colleges. Through the educational option programs and through the use of senior grade assessments preparing the student for college, the school's ability to meet the needs of its graduating students is well developed. The school's parent teacher association arranges transfer visits to assist in this preparation. This is a strong feature of the school.

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.

The quality of the school's systems for implementing assessments is variable. While the school uses data to measure the success of its programs and it regularly objectively assesses the students, there is little diagnostic or formative testing of student achievement in the classroom. Consequently, teachers are not able to use this information to differentiate by input but rely too heavily upon differentiation by outcome. The impact of the teaching is evaluated through test analysis, particularly in mathematics and science.

The school adequately reviews its programs and the effectiveness of its interventions. The review of the effectiveness of the extended day program is an example of the monitoring and evaluation conducted to judge impact. This then feeds back into the Comprehensive Education Plan review cycle. The school's leadership team reviews this document. Goals are realigned according to the available data. However, the goals within the plan are not fully shared with staff, some of whom feel that they are not part of the school's decision-making process.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: John Bowne High School (HS 425)	∅	✓	+
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	