



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Myra S. Barnes Intermediate School

Intermediate School 24

**225 Cleveland Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10308**

Principal: Rosemarie O'Neill

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Reviewer: John Collings

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Myra S Barnes is an intermediate school serving approximately 1600 students ranging from grades 6 through 8. The school is not eligible for Title 1 funding.

The school population comprises approximately 86% White, 2% Black and 8% Hispanic students. There is also a small proportion of students from Asian and other ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 5% are special education students and 1% of students are English language learners. Student attendance, at 93% in 2005, is below that in similar schools and higher than the City average.

The principal was appointed from her previous position as assistant principal in the school approximately three years ago.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has created its own data systems to enable it to track the progress of groups of students very effectively.
- There is very good leadership from the principal and the cabinet.
- The school leaders use data very well to identify the needs of students, especially special education students, and to establish well-targeted intervention programs for them.
- The social and academic needs of students are at the heart of the school culture, with strong support for students to perform as well as they can.
- The leadership is well focused on using data to measure student progress, rather than just performance, as a means of measuring the school's success.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of enrichment activities which help to broaden the students' experiences and raise self-esteem.
- There is a strong climate of learning, which is reflected by students' enjoyment of school and their positive responses in class.
- Students behave well, feel safe and well supported by the staff in school.
- Professional development is very well directed towards the school's objectives.
- Teachers are hard working, committed to their students and very willing to take part in professional development programs.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to refine the school's data systems to identify the needs of students even more precisely.
- Continue the planned professional development program to support all teachers in the effective use of data to further refine their instruction to meet the varied needs of all students.
- Ensure, through greater differentiation, that higher-attaining students are regularly being challenged in class.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The principal was appointed approximately three years ago from the position of assistant principal in the school. Since her appointment student performance has improved. Student behavior is very good and there is a positive climate for learning that pervades the whole school.

The principal's commitment to the students and her desire to secure further improvement has resulted in a very strong emphasis on the use of data to identify student progress. The data is used to measure both the success of the students and the school in achieving stated goals. The school uses very clear data measures. It is refining them further to demonstrate the proportion of students that make the expected progress from one year to the next as well as those that make greater or less progress than expected. There are good examples where this data is used very well to differentiate instruction, with the overall aim that all students make at least satisfactory or better progress year on year. There is a developing emphasis on ensuring that higher-attaining students are appropriately challenged. The school is not complacent and, despite improving outcomes, is continually seeking to refine its data analysis to ensure greater insight into students' strengths and areas for improvement so that it can differentiate instruction and use resources even more effectively.

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 not only uses the data that is made available from the State to analyze performance but it has also developed its own systems so that it can respond more quickly and effectively to the needs of students. The school has used data from previous schools to identify carefully the students' prior achievements. The data is used very well to demonstrate, for example, whether students are improving their levels as they move from one grade to the next. The school is now comparing the relative progress of different groups of students so that it can respond appropriately and adjust programs accordingly. The school is constantly revising its systems, introducing increasingly sophisticated approaches to data analysis so that it is well informed about student progress and where improvements are needed.

The data is particularly well used to enable support, when needed, for different ethnic groups, English language learners and special education students. It is also beginning to be used with good effect with other categories of student within the school to begin to identify whether the programs currently in place are serving students' best interests.

Despite the very good systems to monitor students' progress, the school is eager to use them even more effectively by, for example, ensuring that higher-attaining students are

always fully challenged. The school is already aware of its performance and progress when compared with similar schools and with its own past performance. It uses this information well to benchmark current achievements and set suitable goals for the future.

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.

There is a very clear and collaborative vision for the school which has been developed by the principal and cabinet. They are united in continuing to refine the very good data systems to make what is already in place even more effective. The Comprehensive Education Plan is well structured, with very clearly articulated aims and goals.

Previous aspirational targets have resulted in overall performance which has improved year on year. The school is now, with increased levels of data at its fingertips, beginning to refine its goals successfully into more measurable expectations. For example, it has identified that while overall performance increased last year, with a decline in the number of students at levels one and two within a grade, closer examination of the data demonstrated that there were a few students who had dropped from level four to three in the same time period. This resulted in an increase in the overall numbers of students reaching grade level, but for some students progress was not as good as it should have been. As a result of this finding the school is now, through professional development, seeking to ensure that these higher-attaining students are challenged sufficiently for them to maintain the level gained as they move from one grade to the next.

The school is very good at using the data to identify those students in the greatest need of improvement. Well-focused support is provided through the effective use of a range of available programs, academic intervention staff and differentiated instruction. The school is very adept at then monitoring the effectiveness of these programs through the use of its own data systems. Special education students are particularly well supported.

There is a strong climate for learning in the school, with high expectations for behavior and academic progress. Parents are aware of the high aspirations of the school and feel well informed about their children’s progress through, for example, newsletters, open weeks and parent teacher conferences. They find the principal, senior staff and class teachers all very approachable. The school is taking carefully planned steps to share its academic expectations of students through shared target setting. Students are thus very clear about what is expected of them and by when. All within the school community are committed to ensuring that all students progress as well as they can.

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 implements the mandated curriculum very effectively and uses whatever opportunities it can to broaden the program to involve students more fully and raise their self-esteem. For example, it runs robotics classes and a team of girls from the school won

the regional finals of the First Lego League robotics competition. The school has an enviable reputation for its success with this program. It is also establishing clear linkages across the curriculum so that, for example, particular skills such as 'writing for a purpose' within English language arts are being reinforced during social studies lessons.

Teachers use data well and with increasing sophistication to plan work to match the identified needs of their students. Some staff are more proficient than others, however, in the use of data to create well-tuned differentiated instruction. The vast majority of staff are committed to their work and are fully aware of their responsibility to ensure that students achieve as well as they can.

With the increasing use of data, the school is becoming more adept at directing resources to where they are most needed. This includes staffing and professional development programs. The additional income accrued through the oversubscription to the school is used, for example, to ensure that students who are not making the progress expected are effectively supported by academic intervention, including after-school programs. Scheduling is appropriately matched to the learning needs of the students.

Students are generally well motivated and this is confirmed in walk-throughs by the principal, assistant principals and visitors. Students are well behaved, conscientious with their studies and articulate when discussing their work and other issues with visitors. They trust adults and feel safe in the school. They, very largely, think that the staff have high expectations of them and feel well-informed about their progress. Some higher-attaining students do not always feel fully challenged but those that fall behind feel that they are well supported. Student attendance is a high priority for the school. Any absences are promptly followed up through telephone calls, letters home and, where necessary, home visits.

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

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school is very clear that it will only appoint teachers who are fully committed to the use of data to inform instruction and are willing, if necessary, to undergo professional development in this area. The professional development in the school is of high quality and is much valued by teachers. It is very precisely focused on increasing the skills of staff, not only on the interpretation of data to identify the impact of their instruction, but also to support teachers in refining their differentiation techniques. For example, a very good professional development session was held where teachers were reviewing how they could most effectively differentiate guided reading sessions to ensure that students could interact with the text at their own level yet be sufficiently challenged to make progress.

The principal and assistant principals regularly visit classrooms during the day and in the pre- and after-school sessions. Observations are used to good effect to support individuals where necessary and also to identify school-wide issues that need to be addressed. There is very good collegiality amongst staff and grade meetings are used purposefully to share the best practice. Model lessons are also used where appropriate. Coaches, for example, have provided informative demonstrations on how to support students with a wide range of ability through careful grouping. Staff value the professional development provided to refine their skills and feel very well supported by the leadership team. Practice is strengthening as a result.

The principal and cabinet are well-respected by staff and students. Parents also value both the leadership and the management of the school, especially the way that the assistant principals and deans move through the grades with the same cohort of students so that their children are well known to staff. The successful developments already undertaken by the principal indicate that she has the skills and expertise to effect further change.

The school has links with the Staten Island Yankees through coaching. There are also links with local hospitals and with a commercial bank to help students develop an understanding of financial management. In addition, there are well-focused programs to support students' health and safety. These partnerships provide good opportunities to enrich and enhance the experiences of the students and contribute well to the overall aims 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 school's Comprehensive Education Plan has clear goals and uses diagnostic data focused on student progress effectively to review whether the school is meeting these goals or whether they need to be amended. The school is, however, not complacent and is committed to further improvement. Data is used well, particularly by the principal and senior staff, to identify student progress and note any underachievement. There is also increasing skill and competence amongst the staff in the use of data to inform differentiated instruction as a result of the targeted professional development program. Practice remains variable, however. The well-developed data systems enable school leaders to identify issues very quickly in classrooms and this results in prompt remedial action. The school cabinet regularly reviews these interventions to ensure that the programs continue to be appropriate and effective. The team is aware that, while they know the most effective classrooms, they could use data even more effectively to refine the exact nature of any student underperformance.

Many of the processes that the school uses are innovative and very effective, showing demonstrable results and, as in the best practice, kept under regular review. Its systems are continuing to evolve and the school recognizes that these need to be firmly embedded to ensure that long-term goal-setting and review are even more secure.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Myra S. Barnes Intermediate School (IS 24)	∅	✓	+
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	