



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Pura Belpre School

Public School 64

**1425 Walton Avenue
Bronx
NY 10452**

Principal: Beverley Harrigan

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Reviewer: Mike Doran

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 64 is a kindergarten to 5th grade community school located in a multicultural neighborhood in the South Bronx and serves a large transitional community. The school's current population of 934 students reflects the cultural diversity of the neighborhood: 82% Hispanic and 16% Black students, with the remaining 2% coming from Asian and other backgrounds. The proportions of English language learners (39%), students receiving English as a second language support (29%) and special education students (16%) are high compared with other City schools. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding, with 98% of the students eligible. Currently at 92%, attendance is in line with City and similar schools.

Eighty percent of the teaching staff have taught in the school for more than two years, and the three assistant principals came into post at the beginning of the school year. The school has a strong commitment to enabling students to achieve fluency in English, and to progress successfully both academically and in terms of personal development.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides very good leadership through her openness and clarity of direction.
- The principal is supported strongly by committed, talented and professional teams of administrators and teachers.
- The parents hold the school and its staff in high regard and a significant number are involved in its development.
- The school provides an orderly and safe environment to which students respond with behavior and attitudes to learning that are good.
- Teachers are very supportive to one another and they are provided with a well-planned program of professional development aligned to the needs of the school.
- The schools' intervention programs, informed by close monitoring of the progress and development of individual students, provides timely and effective support for special needs students, those causing concern, and those at risk.
- The mathematics and literacy coaches provide effective professional support to teachers, grade teams, and administrators.
- Literacy, English language learners' and English as a second language programs are strong and are under-pinned by a wide range of assessment tools and teaching and learning strategies.
- The school has successfully engaged in a wide range of external partnership activities to enrich and extend the curriculum, and to provide additional support for students.
- Attendance is maintained by rigorous, effective monitoring, and follow-up systems.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the analysis and use of student performance data in setting goals, in monitoring the progress of the school's Comprehensive Education Plan, and informing the timely revision of plans at the whole school level.
- Extend the use of assessment data to inform a more consistent approach to differentiated lesson planning across all subjects, classes and grades.
- Improve the monitoring of students' progress to enable the setting of challenging and shared goals.
- Continue to develop and resource instructional programs in science, social studies, and the arts.
- Further develop the use of computer technology as a tool for teaching and learning, and for supporting the management and use of student data.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The school's main focus is on literacy and the needs of English language learners and students for whom English is a second language. This has led to the introduction and effective use of a wide range of assessment tools, teaching strategies, and extensive support from community partnerships. Together with the introduction of the workshop model of instruction, this has resulted in the school's steadily improving levels of achievement in standardized tests. It is now poised for the further development of instructional programs, informed by an effective use of student performance data.

The school staff know their students well, and this underpins high levels of individual support for the students with timely intervention and involvement of parents.

Teaching staff work collaboratively and reflectively, and are well supported by effective leadership. Students' needs are partially met through differentiated instructional programs across all subjects and grades informed by the systematic use of student performance data but this is not consistent throughout the school.

Areas for improvement identified in this report are mainly concerned with further extending the systematic collection, recording and analysis of data to inform planning and the monitoring of progress at the classroom and whole school level. The school is well placed to carry out such further improvements.

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

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

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school gathers a wide range of data from standardized tests and internal assessments relating to the current performance and progress of individual students. The data collected is particularly useful and detailed with respect to literacy and the needs of English language learners, students for whom English is a second language, and special needs students. The record systems established for guided reading are particularly effective. Data collection in mathematics and other subjects is less systematic, and there is considerable variation between teachers and grades in how assessments are carried out and records kept. However, the 4th grade team has recently introduced a particularly effective record system for guided mathematics groups. This is being assessed for wider use across the grades.

Data is scrutinized by the school's cabinet, and by grade teams. They monitor the progress of each student, and indicate the next steps in learning and, where necessary, make referral to the academic intervention and pupil personnel teams for more detailed monitoring and support. The emphasis is strongly on literacy. Additionally, there is a sharp focus on students performing near to grade level boundaries and those below. Diagnostic and cumulative assessments in literacy and mathematics are regularly carried out in all grades. Student records are well maintained in the teachers' assessment binders. Analysis of test feedback is used within grade teams to identify and rectify particular weaknesses in the instructional programs and their delivery. Data collection and

management is largely paper based. The use of computers to facilitate the management of data and its interpretation is not a regular practice of teachers.

The recent and current progress of individual students, class by class, grade by grade is scrutinized to inform whole-school planning. However, the school does not extend data collection to longitudinal comparative analysis and the analysis of patterns of under-achievement in student sub-groups.

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 use of data to inform lesson planning, learning goals and next steps is strong in reading and writing, particularly in the middle grades. However, the analysis of data from standardized tests and data from teachers’ own assessments in the classroom is not suitably rigorous or consistently integrated into differentiated lesson planning across other areas of the curriculum and grades. Linked to this there is inconsistency across the school in the setting of challenging goals for students and the identification of next steps in their learning. The school does not extend its use of data to establish timeframes nor to inform collaborative planning and the setting and monitoring of goals at the whole-school level.

The current progress of students is monitored closely, particularly in literacy. Where there is a concern, parents are involved. Students are referred to progressive levels of support and/or intervention programs through the academic intervention and the pupil personnel teams. Provision for English language learners, students for whom English is a second language, and special needs students is good.

All members of the school community have high expectations of the students. The school communicates clearly with parents and involves them from the start in their children’s learning. A rigorous system of progress reports, record cards and student-teacher and teacher-parent conferencing ensures that students and their parents are kept well informed of progress being made. However, the school has not yet introduced shared goal setting and associated planning for next steps in learning fully. The school provides curriculum events and support groups for parents to enable them to support their children’s learning more, but the majority of parents have yet to fully take up these opportunities. Parents appreciate the ready access they have to staff and the timeliness with which teachers let them know of any concerns.

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 has been careful to select its curriculum and augment the mandated curriculum to meet the needs of its students. It has been particularly successful in ensuring good access to the curriculum for students who have limited reading and comprehension skills in English. Curriculum materials are graded for reading level, and standard teaching schemes like Everyday Mathematics, are extensively augmented and supported by appropriate learning resources. Literacy continues to be the major curriculum focus of the school in its instructional programs, closely followed by mathematics. The need to

strengthen other curriculum areas is acknowledged, and this is reflected in current school improvement planning.

The 'workshop' model of collaborative lesson planning has been introduced across the school. However, there is inconsistency between teachers in taking full advantage of its potential to provide a vehicle for differentiated instruction informed by the effective use of student performance data. Mini-lessons and small group work are furthest developed in literacy classes. Guided reading is well established. Students are well behaved, and have a generally responsible attitude towards their learning. Most students are attentive in lessons and engaged by the teaching.

Student attendance is monitored closely. There are effective systems in place to follow up attendance issues with families directly through the school's family support team. Staff know their students extremely well, and students are very appreciative of their openness and approachability. Students confirm that the principal's open-door policy works in practice.

Scheduling, staff deployment, and budget setting are strongly focused on the needs of the students. A large number of staff speak Spanish, and provide effective bilingual instruction. The school is successful in its deployment of subject and grade team lead teachers to provide particular expertise to support school development and the professional development of colleagues. The selection and purchase of curriculum materials is focused on the literacy development needs of the students. Increasingly, funding is being allocated to strengthen curriculum resources in previously neglected curriculum areas such as science, social studies and the arts. The school recognizes that the management of its resources could be further strengthened by the more effective use of student data in whole school planning such as in the identification of patterns of underachievement in particular student groups.

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 some well-developed features.

The principal has established an effective system for staff selection using appropriate range of criteria. A major focus of this process is to maintain a strong bilingual component within the faculty, and to create more breadth in the curriculum, particularly the arts. The selection process has yet to take account of the capability of applicants to make effective use of student performance data to improve performance.

Professional development is aligned to the needs of the school. It is well planned and managed by the cabinet in consultation with staff and is informed by the school's current performance and surveys of teachers' individual needs. Discussion and debate in grade teams is an important part of professional development and staff are able to reflect on and share their teaching practice. Staff expertise, and in particular that of the four coaches, is well deployed to support teaching teams through collaborative planning and joint teaching. However, opportunities are missed to strengthen professional development by the increased involvement of teachers in collaborative whole school planning and the more effective use of school-wide student data such as the identification of patterns of underachievement in particular student groups.

The principal and assistant principals regularly and systematically observe instructional practice and provide good feedback to teachers. This is effective in informing planning for professional development overseen by the cabinet. The coaches follow through with well-planned professional support. Goals are agreed with teachers for their professional

development. Teachers and lead teachers share good practice and this is further enhanced by joint teaching and constructive criticism of each other's classroom practice.

The school is a well run, orderly place and is welcoming to students, parents and visitors. The principal and staff are well respected and are good role models of their high expectations and of their care and commitment to students and their families. The principal has excellent capacity and determination to drive through school improvement plans.

The school has been very successful in establishing partnerships with the community and Citywide organizations to provide support programs for students that enrich and extend the curriculum. These include the New Settlement After School Program, Community Collaborative for the Bronx, Learning leaders, Saturday Prep Academy and Education Station. The school itself has become a community centre with a medical centre and health education, family and counseling programs. This has increasingly brought the school and the community into a closer working relationship.

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

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

At the classroom level, the school has established collaborative planning arrangements across grade teams, overseen by the assistant principals, in relation to the current curriculum provision and instructional programs. Interim and final test results and regular diagnostic measures of student progress, particularly in literacy, are used to monitor, revise and adapt plans through the year, and to target interventions.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is used as a working document, reviewed regularly throughout the year and overseen by the school leadership team. In addition, elements of the plan are reviewed through cabinet meetings and in the principal's regular discussions with grade teams, and intervention teams. However, the planning is expressed too vaguely in terms of its goals and actions and is too firmly routed in the current performance of the students, to provide the necessary wider and strategic perspective of a whole-school plan.

The school does not yet make full use of student performance data to inform the annual Comprehensive Education Plan, and other linked plans, about the comparative performance of some specific groups. Planning does not routinely identify interim, objectively measurable goals or take account of students' starting points to monitor and adapt the plans during the year. The recent appointment of three assistant principal, each with a leadership remit for effectively two grades, now gives the principal an opportunity to strengthen the strategic whole-school planning process.

The school leadership team does not yet play a strong enough role in reviewing the progress of the school using performance data to inform their consideration of options for school improvement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Pura Belpre School (PS 64)	∅	✓	+
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		