



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Great Expectations School

Public School 85

**2400 Marion Avenue
Bronx
NY 10458**

Principal: Ted Husted

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Reviewer: Ted Solow

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 85, located in the Fordham area of the Bronx, is a large elementary school with 1,124 students in kindergarten through grade 5. The student population is predominantly Hispanic 64.41% and Black 32.56%, with small numbers of Asian, White and other students. Just over 26% of students are English language learners and 15.75% are special education students. The school has bi-lingual transitional classes, pull-out programs and a program for newcomers to the United States. There are two collaborative team teaching classes.

Student attendance, at 91.1 %, is close to the average found in similar schools but below that of City schools. Ninety-three percent of students are Title 1 eligible which is higher than that in similar and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal demonstrates strong leadership qualities and fosters an atmosphere of collegiality among all staff members.
- The building is well maintained and halls and classrooms are decorated with many examples of student work that reflect current classroom activities.
- The principal and his administrative team are highly visible, caring and supportive.
- Administration makes good use of data to align instructional activities.
- Learning walks enable staff to plan for improvement, demonstrate teaching practices and discuss their findings.
- Staff members make effective use of data to plan and deliver instruction.
- Data is regularly reviewed to meet the needs of students requiring additional support.
- The professional development program supports the needs of staff and students.
- The educational program actively engages the students.
- Good use is made of resources to support the educational needs of the students.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop the use of Smart Board and computer technology in the classroom.
- Continue to support teachers in differentiating instruction.
- Develop handbooks for students, teachers and parents to communicate the school's rules, policies and procedures.
- Refine and develop the analysis of data to include ethnic groups and other sub-groups of interest in the school.
- Develop further strategies to increase parental involvement in the school life of their children.
- Create a program design to enable grade teams to meet on a more regular basis.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal was assigned to the school two days prior to the opening of the 2006-2007 school year and has a background as an assistant principal at a similar school. The school has gone through several phases of reorganization during recent years. The principal, three assistant principals and the cabinet have, in a short space of time, created a collaborative, collegial relationship to support the goals and efforts of high expectations for all students.

The principal has opened lines of communication with all segments of the school community and has carried out a comprehensive needs assessment. Since September he has held individual discussions with each staff member to get to know them and to establish mutually agreed goals. He has taken the necessary steps to expand training in the use of data to inform and differentiate instruction and recognizes the need to develop the use of technology. There has been a steady decrease in students performing at level 1 and 2 on State examinations over the past three years. The staff work collaboratively in grade teams supported by the literacy and mathematics coaches, enrichment teachers, staff developers, consultants and assistant principals. The school is seeking ways to enable teams to meet together more frequently.

Students across classes and grades are well known to teachers and administrators. They enjoy school and appreciate the support given to them. An on-site medical clinic serves the school community, along with other partners who provide academic enrichment activities and cultural learning experiences for the students.

The principal and his cabinet have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and the capacity to effect change.

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 administrators and teachers collect and analyze data from State sources, periodic Princeton Review assessments, unit tests, developmental reading assessment-2 and Rigby assessment tools. The results are used to establish benchmarks and set progress goals for each student. Performance and progress is monitored by the administration and grade teams for each student, class and grade. Data generated from in-school sources is gathered and analyzed by the staff to identify needs and strengths in English language arts, mathematics and other content areas for students, classes and grades. The principal has developed a useful spreadsheet, 'Class at a Glance', which gives a current view of the performance and progress of every student in the school.

The staff analyze qualitative and quantitative student data and are knowledgeable about the performance and progress of all students, especially the special education students and English language learners. However, the school has recognized the need to refine the data analysis for different groups, such as by ethnicity, health issues, attendance problems and holdovers.

The administrative team evaluates the school's performance over time by reviewing cohort performance data from year to year. Informal comparisons are made with similar district schools by measuring annual student progress, performance on State examinations, attendance and the number of suspensions. The principal has prepared graphic and analytic data that compares the school's performance of low level 3's and 4's in English language arts and mathematics with students across New York State. This data has been shared with the staff in order to highlight areas of strength and weakness. The instructional support advisory team has conducted over 60 case studies this year in an effort to support students identified as being at risk. The after school program has been expanded to include students in grades 1 through 5.

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 collaborative process among staff members is well established at all levels and supported by the principal. Goals for the year are stated in the Comprehensive Education Plan. Using these goals as a springboard, the principal met with each staff member during September and October to establish personal, professional and instructional goals. Goals are continuously reviewed and modified based on the analysis of student assessment data, during monthly school leadership team meetings, and from feedback provided from informal and formal observations of classroom visits and teaching practices. Planning sessions to develop effective strategies, units of study, and to review student assessment data are conducted after school.

Staff are adept at using data to inform instruction. Data binders and student portfolios reveal conscientious efforts to keep data and student work samples current. Information gathered is used to form appropriate instructional groupings in the classroom and drive instructional activities. Students and teachers agree individual achievement goals which are revisited, revised as needed and monitored for progress throughout the year. As a result, students are able to articulate their long and short range goals as well as their current performance levels in literacy and mathematics.

Current practice at the school encourages teachers to identify students in need of academic support in order to make referrals to the instructional support assistance team. Plans are designed to incorporate strategies the teacher can use, along with recommending any additional support needed. Student progress is reviewed at future meetings of the team.

The school reaches out to parents to share its goals and high expectations for student performance and to inform them about how their child is progressing. This is done through a series of open school events, orientation nights, curriculum meetings, parent teacher meetings and through workshops developed by the parent coordinator. Parents receive written notices, report cards and promotion in doubt letters during the course of the year.

The school is actively seeking ways in which to increase parental involvement and plans to develop a web site where all members of the school community can get up-to-date school information and share in its goals and plans.

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 delivers the City mandated curriculum in English language arts and mathematics and the State scope and sequence in science and social studies. As a result of the partnership with the Columbia University Teachers College staff have been trained and are able to use the ‘Readers and Writers Workshop’ model of instruction and leveled libraries in every grade. English as a second language teachers align their instruction when students are pulled out for services. Teachers are now focusing their efforts on guided reading and comprehension activities in the daily literacy block. Regional curriculum calendars provide suggested pacing for literacy and mathematics lessons and teachers modify the calendars to meet the need of their classes. There are many computer resources in the school which are not currently being used to the full. Student data generated from all curriculum activities is used to monitor and assess progress.

Academic rigor, accountable talk and differentiated instructional activities are the school goals for the year. Teachers recognize the need to differentiate instructional activities and many are taking the necessary steps to achieve that goal. They are held accountable for student achievement and asked to look at how they use information and data collected about students to inform daily practices and instruction. Staff make effective use of assessment binders and student portfolios to plan activities and class groupings. As a result, students are actively engaged by independent, group and whole class activities. Staff know their students and the students reported that there is always an adult in school who they can turn to for academic or personal support.

The principal makes very effective use of school data and the needs of students to drive all budgetary and staffing decisions. A recent purchase of a mobile library system, for example, is intended to augment the classroom libraries and introduce new titles for the students to select for independent reading. Recognizing the need for improvement, the principal has initiated discussions with regard to creating a daily common preparation period for each grade and scheduling specialist teachers to serve more students.

Improving student attendance is a high priority. An attendance improvement initiative has recently been introduced which includes developing an attendance awards program and codifying all attendance policies and procedures.

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.

New staff members are selected by the personnel committee. Candidates are judged on their interpersonal skills; desire to work in an inner city school, liking children and good

teaching skills. There is an increasing emphasis on their capacity and commitment to use of data.

Professional development activities are planned effectively by a team made up of teachers, coaches, staff developers, consultants, and administrators. Activities support the needs of staff and students. A monthly calendar informs staff about available professional development activities. Sessions are conducted during grade and faculty conferences. Grade team members attend regional calendar days in literacy and mathematics and provide timely turnkey training for their team members. Teachers are well supported by the literacy and mathematics coaches, the Australian and United States Services in Education consultant, staff developers, enrichment teachers, content area specialists and the assistant principals.

Grade team meetings take place twice each week. Staff make effective use of this time to plan, review units of study, plan lessons and assess student work. The school is seeking ways to increase common preparation time.

There is a regular program of formal and informal intervisitations among staff members which is supported by the administration. The administrative team visits every class two to three times each week. Staff are given immediate verbal feedback. Classroom visits are described as being supportive of teacher's efforts to improve the performance of their students. Formal observations are followed up with a post observation conference and a timely written evaluation.

The principal is respected for the effectiveness of his leadership skills. He is described by all groups in the school community as being highly visible, accessible, a good listener, knowledgeable and knows the students and their parents. Since his appointment he has demonstrated a good capacity to effect change.

The school building is well maintained and is a pleasant learning environment. The halls and classrooms are decorated with many examples of student work reflecting classroom units of study. The school runs smoothly. Rules and regulations are known and followed and contribute to an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. As yet, the rules, regulations, policies and procedures have not been formalized into handbooks for students, staff and parents.

The school has developed effective partnerships with community organizations that support the academic, medical, social, cultural and recreational goals of the school. The Montefiore Hospital has a full time clinic at the school for students and their families and has a seat on the school leadership committee.

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 Comprehensive Education Plan outlines the practices and policies for evaluating the progress of students throughout the school year. The plan is closely monitored and is revised periodically by the school leadership team to reflect the current status of school and student assessment data. This year's focus was to improve attendance and to move the whole school to use the developmental reading assessment–2 tool to determine

student reading levels throughout the school. The school leadership team evaluated the assessment tool and saw how it would provide continuity of information from grade to grade. These efforts have enabled the instructional support team to create a system to identify, monitor, and evaluate the progress of struggling students and keep parents informed as to their child's progress.

Regular assessments in English language arts and mathematics provide data which guides instructional practices. Student progress within each class and grade is monitored by reviewing current formal and informal assessment data, student groupings, and other information, such as observations, to support student learning. The principal reviews data from similar schools in the district to observe trends and progress. A recent trend in lowering the number of students achieving level 1's and 2's in English language arts and mathematics and a plateau being reached at level 3 and 4 has presented an item for further investigation by the coaches, consultants and administrators.

Data from all sources is used to actively monitor student achievement. Goal reassessments are discussed at grade level meetings with coaches, staff developers, consultants, subject area specialists, and administrators to see if the needs of students are being met. When issues are identified the principal has the ability to deploy resources flexibly and review instructional practices to address newly identified goals and to improve student achievement outcomes.

The school is moving forward under the leadership of the new principal and systems and structures are continually being developed, monitored, evaluated and revised as part of a developmental process.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Great Expectations School (PS 85)	∅	✓	+
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	