



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Banana Kelly High School

High School 530

**965 Longwood Avenue
Bronx
NY 10459**

Principal: Joshua Laub

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Reviewer: Louise Kapner

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Banana Kelly High School, an empowerment school located in the south Bronx, serves 357 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The majority (68%) of students are Hispanic, far higher than the averages for similar schools and City schools. Of the remainder, 31% are Black, which is below the averages for similar and City schools. A range of other groups makes up the remaining students. Approximately 87% are eligible for Title 1 funding which is higher than in similar and City schools. The school has 38 (10%) special education students, above the averages for similar and City schools, and 50 English language learners (14%), which is below the average for similar schools but average when compared City-wide. Attendance at 86% is above the averages for similar and City schools.

Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides strong, dynamic and inspirational school leadership.
- The extended cabinet is highly skilled and works collaboratively to further the school's goals.
- Students are actively engaged in learning and are appreciative of the small supportive environment.
- The school has a highly organized system of curriculum development and monitoring instruction.
- Teachers are committed to providing students with opportunities that further their academic and social growth.
- Professional development is an integral part of the school and is well used to support teachers.
- Successful external partnerships support the school's goals.
- The collection of data is at a very high level and it is effectively used to guide instruction and monitor student performance and progress.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop teachers' skills in using data to differentiate instruction.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

Banana Kelly High School, approaching its tenth year as a small school, is strongly committed to providing its students with a comprehensive curriculum-rich program that supports them in becoming successful learners and enables them to mature socially. A highly collegial, collaborative atmosphere fosters an environment where students are respected and are actively engaged in learning. The school has effective systems to analyze performance data and to modify programs and activities to meet more closely the needs of the students. Professional development is an integral part of the school and is well used to improve instruction. The challenge for the school is to enhance the skills of teachers further in using data to design differentiated activities in classes to align instruction to the needs of all students.

Results from a New York University 'Beat the Odds' study indicate that a higher percentage of Banana Kelly students who entered the City University of New York college system are successfully staying in school after two years when compared to graduates from 150 other New York City high schools.

Given the principal's high quality leadership and the support of staff, parents and students, the school is well placed to build on past successes for future graduates.

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 uses available data and generates data of its own to analyze and monitor its performance in subjects and classes as well as the performance of individual students. Results from standardized assessments, the North West Educational Association interim assessment and authentic student work are regularly reviewed and are used well to guide instruction for all students. For incoming 9th graders, many of whom are performing below standards, an internal diagnostic assessment in English language arts and mathematics is highly effective for grouping students and guiding instruction. For example, a co-teaching model in mathematics and science has increased the course pass rate from 25% to over 75% over a four year span.

An on-line student information system, Powerschool, is up-dated periodically with performance and pertinent student data. The school identifies and analyzes trends in student performance both in the short term and over time. Tracking and monitoring are ongoing during the school year and from year to year to identify clearly and compare the performance and progress of other categories of students of interest to the school. For example, students at risk of not meeting standards or those with below 79% attendance are targeted for greater support. Using the high school schedules and student transcripts

the school analyzes data and disaggregates information for English language learners. The individual education plan is used effectively to design appropriate support for special education students. The school uses data to understand the performance and progress of all ethnic groups. For example, performance data identified native-born Black males as the lowest performing group and was then analyzed in more detail to improve instruction.

The principal compares the school's performance with similar and other schools within the region. Data for the school's own cohorts, by student, subject and ethnicity is regularly reviewed as an indicator of the school's progress from year to year and during the course of the year, and is effectively used to guide decision making and to plan next steps for the school. The recently received 2005-2006 progress report enables the principal to compare his school with City and peer schools.

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.

Teachers have a very good knowledge of their students' achievement and are highly responsive to their needs. Data is well used to collaboratively set short-term and long-range instructional goals that focus on grade, subject and individual students. Teachers are well informed of pass and fail rates of their students and have detailed knowledge of the skills needed for students to succeed. Review of the data showed incoming 9th graders achieving below standards in both English language arts and mathematics. The introduction of internal diagnostic assessments and block programming enable students to receive concentrated, appropriate instruction to improve their learning outcomes. The school's small environment is highly supportive of this collaborative process. Available data, on-going assessments and authentic student work are regularly reviewed and are utilized to guide instruction. Co-teaching of content area courses and collaborative team teaching of special education and general education students enable teachers to engage in conversations to plan and provide interdisciplinary and differentiated instruction.

Students targeted to receive additional academic support are constantly being reviewed and programs changed in response to data analysis. During an extended day program and on Saturdays students are provided with tutoring and preparation for standardized tests. A student, who identified himself as illiterate upon entering the school as a 9th grader, received intensive instruction in the Wilson program. As a 10th grader he is now reading on the 6th grade level. Attendance data identified those students with the highest rate of absences. These students receive additional academic support after school.

Expectations are high for the entire school community. The school is looking to raise its graduation rates with more students moving on to college. Many teachers provide detailed course goals and requirements at the beginning of the school year that require both student and parent signature. Students and parents participate in setting goals. Instructional and grading rubrics accompany assignments. An honor roll and principal's list recognize students with high achievement. Parents are very appreciative of the school's commitment to their children and the responsiveness of staff and the administration. They have access to Powerschool and monitor their own child's progress. Emails to teachers receive quick responses. As an example of a parent's high regard for the school a sibling of a present student will be attending the school in September.

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 well developed.

The school follows the mandated high school curriculum with the addition of more rigorous programming. Students are required to take four years of mathematics and science. Twelfth grade students are programmed into major subjects even in their last semester. Students in all classrooms are highly engaged in learning. An economics class of seniors, for example, was actively involved in discussions as they tracked their stock portfolios. Grade-appropriate, well-differentiated, school-generated content areas comprehensively outline instructional goals and anticipated student outcomes.

Teachers are highly accountable for providing good instruction and meeting student needs. The principal meets individually with each teacher twice yearly. The conversation centers on classroom instruction and alignment with school goals. Teacher participation in professional development is reviewed relative to its use in supporting teaching and learning in the classroom. Binderology, a school initiative, requires all teachers to maintain an all-inclusive book of school-generated curriculum mapping, their own lesson plans and assessments, and student work. High priority is given to using authentic student work to differentiate instruction. A rubric of multiple activities to support differentiated instruction is provided to staff. Currently, while there is some good practice in using data to differentiate instruction, this is not consistent throughout the school. Through a connector initiative, interdisciplinary teaching is encouraged and engages students in project-based learning. The drama, science and English teachers, for example, co-facilitated a project on Archimedes.

Budget, staffing and scheduling decisions are data driven and impact positively on student achievement. The English department attended a national conference on teaching English. Staff strengths are capitalized on, and the expanded cabinet includes the coaches, who are instrumental in designing and supporting the curriculum and professional development. Extended instructional days for all students, supported by a 21st Century grant in collaboration with ASPIRA, enables early dismissal of students on Fridays, and all teachers then attend grade meetings and professional development.

The school actively monitors attendance and several strategies are employed to encourage good attendance. Every student has an adult mentor with whom they meet daily. There is a high quality of interaction between students and staff. Students echoed the importance of being in a small environment as critical to their success in school. ‘Teachers talk to you’, one said. ‘You don’t have to wait too long to get a hold of someone.’

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 principal is very active in hiring staff. He visits university campuses beginning in December to recruit teachers. A hiring committee interviews prospective candidates who must show a commitment and capacity to use data to improve student achievement.

Professional development is an integral part of the school's focus to help teachers learn how to reach all students and help them be successful. An exceptionally well-planned calendar provides each semester's weekly plans. It is highly differentiated and data driven. Teachers can participate in whole staff, small group, content area, and/or interest groups. This is well supported by the coaches and administrators. One teacher shared that they 'respect that we are learners as well as educators'. Professional development logs enable teachers to reflect on ways in which the activity will be incorporated into their classroom to improve student achievement. The principal also reviews teacher participation to identify those who may need further support. Grade and team meetings are further opportunities to engage staff in collaborative work that values good planning to improve student outcomes. An intervention team of seven staff members focuses on youth development including behavior, attendance, peer mediation and citizenship.

Learning walks and informal observations are well used by the coaches and administrators to design professional development. Teachers are provided with three strengths and three things that need further work. They are appreciative of the feedback. Science teachers participate in inter-school visitations. Although there are no formal structures in the school for classroom inter-visitations, the small environment and co-teaching both support sharing of best practices. Inter-visitations by the principal to other schools are facilitated by the network's achievement manager.

The principal is highly respected and provides excellent, insightful leadership. He has ambitious goals for the school and clearly communicates procedures and systems to raise student achievement. Staff support his efforts and his work is having a positive impact on student achievement. Productive partnerships further the school's goals. Professors from Bard College visit monthly and meet with mathematics and social studies teachers to design assessments and plan instruction. A coach from the National Academy for Excellent Teaching at Teachers' College in Columbia University works on-site two days a week supporting literacy and professional development.

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 well developed.

The principal knows the school very well. Administrators and teachers rigorously review, on an on-going basis, the school's data for trends and patterns. Careful review of data supports the realignment of resources and practices. Comparisons of students' performance in different content areas and classes are well used to rethink and re-teach skills to raise academic achievement. For example, credit recovery courses were implemented during the spring term based upon student data. A review of the mathematics A Regents indicated the need for students to be able to read and comprehend posed problems, for example. Professional development then supported the inclusion of literacy skills into the content area. This review of student data is constant and well used to plan both short-term and long-range goals for the school.

The Comprehensive Education Plan serves as a good guide for the school. Each of the school constituencies are represented in the group that writes the document. The school is now planning for school year 2007-2008, looking at the next steps needed to improve student outcomes even further.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Banana Kelly High School (HS 530)	∅	✓	+
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