



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Bergen Beach School

Public School 312

**7103 Avenue T
Brooklyn
NY 11234**

Principal: Linda Beal Benigno

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Reviewer: Georgie Grosman

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

Overall evaluation

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Bergen Beach School is an elementary school with 870 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 28% Black, 9% Hispanic, 58% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 96.1%. The school does not receive Title 1 funding for students.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school collects and evaluates very detailed data to understand the performance and progress of each student.
- The professional development of teachers and other staff is closely linked to the school improvement goals.
- The school evaluates and addresses the needs of special education students and English language learners carefully.
- There is a relentless drive in focus groups to develop effective strategies to meet all students' needs and raise performance.
- Consistently high expectations underpin all decisions made in the school and impact positively on all aspects of student development.
- An extensive range of partnerships across the City enriches the school's outstanding arts curriculum.
- Lessons are dynamic and engaging.
- Relationships amongst students and adults in the school are excellent.
- New teachers receive a very comprehensive range of support to ensure they understand and can deliver the school's expectations for high quality instruction.
- Parents respect and value what the school achieves with their children and give significant support through their involvement.

What the school needs to improve

- Involve teachers in the monitoring of progress and achievement of all sub-groups of students, including ethnic and gender groups.
- Develop formal systems for comparisons with similar schools to assess relative progress.
- Refine measurability of goals at student, class, grade and school level to include interim measures.
- Formalize opportunities for parents to give the school information about their children's learning needs and strengths.

Part 3: Main findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The principal and assistant principals give strong leadership. They have imbued a culture of aspiration, expectation and respect for all throughout the school community. They give a clear lead on curriculum and instructional planning. Teachers work collaboratively to establish plans, strategies and goals to improve continually the progress of individual students. Effective systems in collecting and analyzing data facilitate a greater understanding and knowledge about individual student's achievement and progress. There is a marked emphasis on differentiation at all levels. The school's culture is one where staff are committed to ensuring all students achieve well.

The school has tackled effectively the previous recommendation to build sufficient flexibility into the professional development calendar. Differentiated small-group work supplements development days and teachers can select their professional development to suit current need. A previous recommendation to provide more graphically explicit data has shown some progress. The school disseminates a wealth of available data to all staff, but does not yet present it in a way that quickly and clearly illustrates the differences in achievement of some student sub-groups. The inquiry team, previously known by a different name, meets regularly to focus on the achievement and progress of specific student groupings.

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 the student's progress over time.

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

The school has well-embedded systems for gathering a comprehensive range of data, including mandated tests and ongoing teacher assessments. Teachers keep all data in accessible binders and use it as an everyday tool to monitor student progress. The school disaggregates the data by class, grade and subject, and analyzes the achievement and progress of English language learners, special education students, and the gifted and talented students. The principal and assistant principals know how well the ethnic and gender groups are achieving. However, they have not shared their analysis with the wider school community. Consequently, teachers do not all have a clear view of how well these students are performing as a group. The school gives English language learners, who have tested as proficient, ongoing support within general education classes to help maintain their progress rate. Regular assessments on an individual and collective basis enable the school to track progress over time closely.

The faculty uses data well to identify the students whose progress has slowed and plans interventions to support their particular needs. The school tracks its performance routinely year-by-year to evaluate improvements. Although maintaining contact with the other schools, the principal does not yet compare the school's performance against those in its identified similar schools group. As a result, the school does not know whether and how some schools may be more successful in some aspects.

The inquiry team analyzes individual student growth and identifies strategies to accelerate student progress and raise achievement. Six lead teachers work with an assistant principal to evaluate assessment data before challenging each other with questions such as, "how does each group's achievement compare with the previous year?" to evaluate whether enough progress has been made each year.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

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

The school works assiduously at setting demanding goals for raising the performance of each student. Teachers and cabinet members work collaboratively to identify and plan support and strategies to meet the individual student and group needs. Outcomes from the inquiry team discussions contribute to the formulation of whole-school social and curriculum goals within subject action plans. Teachers refer students whose progress has slowed to focus group for specific monitoring. Members of the focus group evaluate and analyze the assessment data, class profile and running records and subsequently arrange interventions for identified students by a specialist teacher. The group regularly evaluates the effectiveness of these interventions against student progress. The school tailors teachers' professional development to school goals.

The whole school community embraces the school's goals and so effectively supports the vision "to strive to be the best". The administration and faculty have high expectations of students and students of themselves because this ethic is embedded in the school ethos. The school weaves into its everyday actions and decisions the enthusiastic celebrations of class and individual student achievement. Through constant review of students' progress, teachers reflect on their practice and constantly strive to improve their work.

The principal has an in-depth knowledge of working with and supporting students who struggle to achieve well. Through the "Highlight Five" initiative, special education teachers identify five students whose progress is slower than expected. Together they plan new strategies and additional interventions to help these students fulfill their personal goals and so the school's improvement goals.

An effective support team encourages parents to attend a variety of workshops held at the school throughout the year. Workshops give parents good opportunity to learn about the curriculum and about how to help their children with a particular skills or homework task. The parent coordinator frequently liaises with the school on behalf of a parent who cannot visit personally due to work commitments or parents who may have little English. As a result, the school enables all parents to support its work. The open-door policy facilitates good opportunity for parents to speak to teachers or the administration about their children. The school sends parents and caregivers regular progress reports about student goals, progress and achievement. Students' school planners give an additional way for parents and the school to communicate with each other. The newly introduced parent survey

encourages families to express their views and gives parents a new forum through which to give the school valuable information about their children's strengths and needs.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

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

The principal and assistant principal have a profound understanding of how to develop students' learning through a balanced core curriculum. The school has consequently chosen curriculum programs that enable teachers to gather a range of meaningful assessment data against which to monitor progress. The analysis of these assessments allows the teachers to target instruction to individual student's needs and carry out an ongoing evaluation for each student. The enrichment curriculum for the gifted class is good. An outstanding range of enrichment opportunities engage all students within and beyond the school day and result in newly developed skills and enhanced self-esteem.

When planning lessons, teachers differentiate learning not only by ability levels but also by students' preferred learning method and interest level. This ensures that most lessons are interesting and matched well to each group of student's needs. A careful analysis of assessments identifies specific skills that need re-teaching and inform any adjustments to curriculum planning. As a result, students are involved in and enjoy their lessons in class.

Decisions for staff budgeting and scheduling are based on the needs of the students in keeping with the school vision. In selecting staff, the principal looks for ambition and drive "to be the best". Effective systems are in place to monitor absence and tardiness and encourage good attendance and punctuality. There is an expectation from the school that students should be prompt and should only be absent when they are ill. The parent coordinator takes homework to the student's home and supports parents where needed.

There is evidently a strong ethos of respect between student and teacher and the administration. Positive and productive relationships across the school in all interactions create an excellent tone and climate. Students and parents value the high priority given to their creative, artistic and personal development.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

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

There is a strong culture of continuous learning and so teachers are always looking for ways to refine their skills and improve teaching strategies. Teachers reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching strategies in grade meetings and focus groups. The principal and assistant principals make regular walkthroughs to evaluate the quality of instruction and learning. Teachers respond positively to the professional feedback, which identifies strengths and any weaknesses in their methodologies. Observations focus on how effectively teachers differentiate instruction and plan for individualized learning. These observations make teachers accountable and enable the principal to strive for the best possible learning environment for students to thrive. Teachers regularly visit each other's classes to observe good practice.

The school's annual professional development program is effective because it grows from what data is showing is in need of improvement. The differentiated small group work is particularly valuable to new teachers. Second year teachers select their professional development to link with the goals identified in the previous year's mentoring program. Individual surveys together with curriculum demands, define professional development planning. Tailored professional development given to paraprofessionals has led to more effective support in class. Teachers College coaches model lessons, to hone teachers' skills and help them to deliver interesting lessons.

A strong focus on youth and personal development reflects the importance placed on personal development by the school. Throughout the classes, character building illustrations and rubrics encourage students to reflect on their contributions to the school's work. Clear and consistent systems and procedures for encouraging good behavior are in place and followed by both staff and students. As a result, students are well behaved and respectful of each other's feelings, views and belongings.

Outstanding partnership opportunities enthuse and enrich the students' desire to succeed. The considerable number of partnerships leads to highly enriched and successful programs. For example, parents conduct a business club where the students take on individual roles to develop a business proposal. In a teachers' club, students train to become teachers and act out this part in role-play and drama. Students learn what it is like to be a journalist in the newspaper club, through interviewing people and writing articles. Partnerships with Carnegie Hall, professional theater and ballet companies give good opportunities for students to perform in dance and music. Museum visits give students access to cultural events in New York City. Local politicians are instrumental in securing funding for the school.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

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

Clear structures enable the school to evaluate constantly its work. The Comprehensive Education Plan has timeframes and quantifiable goals that the school uses to evaluate its performance against student progress. Goals do not have precise interim measures based on data from periodic assessments. As a result, although the school knows whether it is successful in the end-of-year reviews, it does not have sufficient information to evaluate whether it is on track to reach its goals.

The administration and teachers adapt and adjust programs continuously in response to data from ongoing assessments and monitoring activities. This creates a culture of self-evaluation and continuous professional growth. The monitoring of teachers through frequent observation and discussions, leads to constant refinement of lesson plans, goals and strategies. Each year, staff work together to evaluate the previous year's successes and areas of growth before setting goals that build on outcomes for the following year. Strategic decisions grow from the scrutiny of achievement data.

The principal's vision is very clear and is alive in the school's everyday systems and practice. She is constantly looking for ways to improve the school and when necessary to effect positive change.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Bergen Beach School	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students' progress over time.					
To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?			X		
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.					
To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?					X
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?					X
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?				X	
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?					X
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?					X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X	

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X	