



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Bedford Stuyvesant Preparatory High School

High School 575

**832 Marcy Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11216**

Principal: Marisol Bradbury

Dates of review: March 12 - 13, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Roy Storrs

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bedford Stuyvesant Preparatory is a transfer high school with 176 students from grade 9 through grade 12 who have not succeeded in the traditional high school setting. The school population comprises 87% Black and 13% Hispanic students. The student body includes no English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 42% of the students enrolled and girls account for 58%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 76%.

The school is located in a landmark building erected in 1870 as a Boys' high school. It shares the building with another transfer high school, a GED program and a nursery for the students' children.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The dynamic and visionary principal's determination has instilled a powerful culture of high expectations and achievement.
- She and her loyal assistant principal have complementary skills which together provide strong academic and instructional leadership.
- Meticulous data collection provides a detailed overview of every student enabling the school to set challenging goals and to monitor rigorously.
- The case study arrangements actively involve every teacher in reviewing and supporting individual students' achievements.
- Advisories play a significant part in promoting students' social, emotional and academic growth.
- The dedicated and collaborative staff's engagement in study groups helps them reflect upon and improve their instruction.
- While maintaining the focus on helping students graduate, the school offers them a range of enriching activities.
- The genuinely respectful rapport between teachers and students has engendered a strong work ethic.
- Displays celebrating students' achievements, including high quality art work, throughout the building enhance the industrious learning atmosphere.
- Through her belief in shared responsibility, the principal has established the school as a reflective and effective small learning community.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to provide training for less confident teachers in using assessment data to plan more interesting and differentiated lessons.
- Devise a protocol for the collation of student portfolios to improve their effectiveness as a key assessment tool.
- Build upon teachers' collaborative assessment logs so that they set more sharply focused goals which are measurable and time-related.
- Involve students more directly in setting their own short-term curricular targets.

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.

Under the principal's determined and skilful leadership, supported by her loyal assistant principal, the school has made remarkable progress during the past year. High expectations abound, so that students who have failed elsewhere are finding success under this regime. This achievement is due to the principal's understanding of the indisputable link between data and instruction. She has established thorough systems for collecting and analyzing data from every possible source to gain detailed on-going knowledge about every student. This information enables the school to place students in suitable classes and intervention programs and to monitor their effectiveness rigorously. While goal setting is firmly established, some teachers are less confident in using data to plan differentiated instruction. Teachers' collaborative assessment logs result in targets, but not sharply focused time-related goals. Similarly, students' targets might be expressed as short-term curricular goals. Teachers maintain portfolios for each student, but these are not fully effective as assessment tools. The staff works effectively in small teams and the principal places considerable emphasis upon the whole staff team working together, so a great sense of community is constantly evident. The carefully planned curriculum and thoughtful guidance systems effectively support students' academic, emotional and social needs. The attractive and well cared for environment is enhanced considerably by high quality displays of students' achievements, especially art work. Respectful relationships and a majority of lively teaching engage students' interest and contribute to a positive learning ethos and improving standards. The principal addressed all issues from the previous report conscientiously. Teachers and students are using computer technology regularly and effectively, advisories are in place across the school and rigorous monitoring procedures established. The school's innovative approach has the inquiry team analyzing data of 17 students from next year's graduation cohort. The process involves every staff member contributing to a weekly, early morning individual student case study, leading to a detailed action plan.

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 principal's dynamic determination to serve her students well has resulted in rigorous data accumulation. Data is painstakingly presented in a variety of forms to support

teachers and guidance counselors and includes an impressive whole school summary chart on display in the principal's office. The collection starts with a review upon enrolment and includes data of academic performance over time, and information about social circumstances, behavior and attendance which impact upon students' achievement and progress. Thorough analysis of the data enables the administration, faculty and guidance staff to have a regularly updated picture of each student, to place them in appropriate groupings and to monitor their progress constantly. Most teachers are adept at using data, but there remain a few who are less confident. The principal's persistence enables her to know every student's details. The novel case study initiative actively includes every staff member in sharing and using this knowledge for the students' benefit. There are no English language learners, but data on the five special education students is impressively coordinated by the school's social worker, ensuring that their needs are well met.

Close analysis of data identified the issue of African American male students cutting classes and attending erratically. To alleviate this pattern the school has provided interesting activities such as an impressive weights room, football and well-attended male and female book clubs led by the assistant principal and principal respectively. Their impact is shown by the school honors board now having male and female students in equal number. With such an exhaustive approach to data the school tracks its own performance demonstrating its success in increasing achievement in all subjects year on year. Comparative data not only shows that the school is being far more effective than most other transfer schools but that it is holding its own against high schools generally.

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 developed.

Whole staff team work is a significant strength of this school as it ensures everyone has a voice and is party to key decisions and goal setting. Examples of its positive impact are clearly evident in the recently produced grading policy and student case study arrangements. Case studies focus on individual students from next year's graduation cohort about whom there are concerns, identified as subjects for the inquiry team. These weekly early morning events actively include every staff member in analyzing data, identifying issues and working on individual action plans. Not only does this process unify the staff and demonstrate their shared responsibility, but the skilful way the principal conducts each study case study is an effective form of professional development for the staff. Daily common preparation periods enable subject departments to work together to plan and set challenging goals for their students. Through discussion with the principal around the teacher's collaborative assessment log, each teacher sets targets, although these are not expressed as sharply focused goals which are measurable and time-related. Students know what is expected of them but are not fully involved in setting their own short-term goals to help them towards their overall goal of graduating. While student portfolios have potential as a key assessment tool, there are inconsistencies in the way teachers maintain and use them. An effective means of assessment is the recently introduced "exit slip" which students complete at the end of each lesson to record what they have learned and understood.

The principal's belief in transparency results in all members of the school community being made aware of every aspects of school life including its goals, aspirations and

high expectations. Teachers and parents recognize her persistence in saying that, “She doesn’t just follow up, she follows through”. Her expectations are typified by students’ positive attitudes and behavior and attractive displays throughout the building celebrating students’ achievements, including high quality art work. Regular communications with parents ensure a constant flow of vital information about students’ performance between home and school.

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 developed.

As a transfer high school, the curriculum is inevitably weighted towards helping students graduate. Extended day credit recovery arrangements feature strongly and a school-wide literacy plan is not only improving students’ reading and writing skills, but also facilitating valuable inter-department collaboration. To offer students further challenge Math B and Spanish Regents programs have been introduced this year. A strong emphasis upon critical thinking, developing research skills and making learning fun further enhances students’ learning and degree of engagement. Knowing their accountability, most of the dedicated and collaborative teachers inject challenge, enliven lessons through practical activities, and differentiate their instruction to match students’ needs. A few teachers are less confident in using assessment data to plan lessons which are interesting and suitably differentiated. The curriculum is enriched by classes in art, film making, culinary arts and a variety of physical education, including weight training. These are effectively supplemented by a range of clubs and team sports.

The principal’s carefully considered and bold strategic budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions focused on student needs have been instrumental in the school’s rapid improvement. She has reduced administrative support, cut other unproductive posts and discontinued Saturday school. Funds thus released have enabled her to improve resources for technology and physical education. Most importantly, creating small teaching groups has had the greatest impact upon instruction and student engagement. A peaceful, industrious atmosphere and a strong work ethic permeate the school. This is due to the genuinely respectful rapport between students and teachers. This has much to do with the teachers’ preparedness to give so much of their own time for their students’ welfare, which the students recognize and appreciate. The attendance team operates as three efficient sub-teams each with a smaller caseload. Relentlessly followed procedures have reduced cutting and improved attendance which, for many weeks this semester, has exceeded 85%.

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.

The principal and assistant principal constantly monitor classrooms. “We can’t keep them out.” say the teachers, who are very comfortable with this approach as they value the constructive feedback. Teachers also gain considerably from learning walkthroughs

involving the administration and four teachers. These thoughtfully planned events focus on the quality of learning; include preparatory discussions and subsequent analysis. The group write a summary of successes, challenges, possible next steps and support needs which is shared with the whole staff to raise the quality of instruction. Another impressive feature is the study group concept. Teachers within each department plan a lesson together which one of them teaches while the others observe and take notes. They discuss the lesson, rewrite it and it is re-taught to check its improvement. As the focus is on students' learning not teaching, this is a very powerful, collaborative means of improving lessons. Beyond these very effective events, teachers benefit from a wide range of professional development activities. The most effective training occurs in school, such as the detailed analysis of three pieces of work by several students to help define strategies for improving differentiation. Thorough mentoring arrangements, daily common preparation periods, study groups and whole staff support have helped the five new teachers to grow professionally and have made them feel part of the school family.

The school-wide advisory program involving twice weekly classes is helping students considerably in their academic, social and emotional development. Teachers, one of the guidance counselors or the social worker, in pairs, with eight students teach a well balanced program which they have designed. The advisors benefit from weekly meetings where they share and discuss experiences and refine their work. The advisories, effective case conference initiative and the regular work of the whole staff provide excellent support for each student. Students and teachers also gain considerably from constructive links with an increasing range of academic, arts and business organisations. The principal's personal touch, clear expectations and precise routines ensure the school operates smoothly and effectively.

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.

The principal is passionate about shared responsibility as a means of having everyone on board and pulling in the same direction. Her collaborative approach has established the school as a reflective and effective small learning community, which is constantly assessing its performance. Whole school goals clearly stated in the Comprehensive Education Plan inform subsequent goal setting at department and individual teacher level. The school's regular use of its conscientious data collection facilitates rigorous monitoring of the goals set. Classroom observations by administration and teachers and the subject study groups focus sharply on improving instructional practice with positive results. Teachers' regular assessment procedures, team and whole staff meetings gauge the effectiveness of the school's plans and programs and lead to rapid adjustments if deemed necessary. Through these means and because the principal and assistant principal are integrally involved in all monitoring procedures, they are able to make effective strategic decisions for improvement based on sound evidence. Examples of this are the introduction of the school-wide literacy plan and advisory program. Through the principal's rigorous approach the school has made tremendous strides towards achieving its vision of successfully preparing students for a productive life at college and beyond.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Bedford Stuyvesant Preparatory High 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 students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, 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 and tardiness?				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, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				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

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped