



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Bedford Academy High School

High School 595

**1119 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11216**

Principal: George Leonard

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Lead Reviewer: Peter Lewis

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bedford Academy is a high school with 327 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 85% Black, 10% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students, with 2% of non-declared ethnicity. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 91.5%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides leadership that inspires staff, students and parents, and which is instrumental in translating the school's vision into reality.
- All students make exceptional progress because of the school's work in precisely identifying their needs and planning highly effective interventions.
- The school's belief that 'Failure is not an option' is brought to life by clear procedures and a range of systems that support very high expectations.
- The school's strong systems of support and guidance are successful in boosting students' self esteem, their motivation and their achievement.
- Very focused observations and feedback by the principal and his assistants ensure that teaching is well focused on improving students' learning.
- Data is used very well by, leaders, teachers, and support staff to gauge students' performance and modify programs to meet students' needs.
- The needs of the lowest performing students, and those giving the most concern, are understood and addressed exceptionally well.
- The school is exceptionally well managed, with clear systems that align organization with student learning.
- Staff and students work very well together in an atmosphere that provides professional and academic support and challenge.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that all lessons are planned with clear aims for what students will learn, and that the information is used in tracking progress between tests.
- Further develop teachers' understanding of data to establish even greater differentiation and consistency of challenge for students.

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.

As a school community, Bedford Academy has taken as its own, the principal's passionate belief in the potential of its students. A sense of the highest expectations of leaders, staff and students characterizes all of the school's work. There are features of exceptional practice that have enabled teachers and leaders to ensure very rapid progress for all of their students, many of whom start with low achievement. It provides a powerfully motivating, well thought out and broad curriculum, which is well reinforced by a highly effective program of enrichment and support. The school has a very clear picture of how well its students are doing; how it can best help them to improve and how it will know that it has been successful. The school is very much part of its community. Parents are fully involved and are proud of their children's achievements and the self-esteem with which they have been provided. As one observed, "I sometimes have to phone my son to get him to come home!"

The school has taken full account of the areas for improvement from its last review, and has addressed them comprehensively. Strategic planning is well focused on areas identified from the analysis of data. Areas for improvement are accurately identified and carefully considered plans to secure improvement have been put in place. Because of the rigorous monitoring systems that are firmly established, there is a very good understanding of the progress toward achieving success. The principal is firmly of the belief that the whole school constitutes the research base for the inquiry team. As the majority of students start with comparatively low achievement and equally low expectations of their own potential, the school focuses its efforts strongly and successfully on understanding and meeting their needs. Leaders have worked closely with a senior member of staff with a good knowledge of data and its interpretation in developing a whole school understanding of data and its interpretation.

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 collects and analyzes data from external examinations and internal testing very well. The principal has ensured that a comprehensive range of assessment information is available, interpreted accurately, and provided to teachers and support staff. Because of this, the school has been able to identify dips in learning and plan

precise support and interventions, and modifications rapidly made to its programs. Training in assessment is well focused, on-going and has been highly effective in ensuring that the school community is well aware of patterns of student achievement. Comparisons across subjects, grades and classes are undertaken as a matter of course and enable resources and extra support to be focused precisely on students' needs. Although there is a very small number of English language learners and special education students, the school recognizes the importance of identifying whether the progress they make is sufficient. It has established good systems of analysis to support this.

The principal has made sure that the school's good knowledge of students' personal development is well used in understanding their learning needs. Consequently, a good range of information is gathered which builds a clear picture of students' family circumstances and their attendance. This has enabled the school to better understand the performance of different groups of students and to target support that is closely aligned to their needs. An exceptionally strong feature of the school's provision is in the development of the "9 to 9" program, in which students identified as at risk are mandated to join a program of intensive study, concentrated over twelve hours a day for 3 weeks at a time in the fall, winter and spring. The impact of this is strong and highly focused on building students' achievement from known points, and is a major factor in the school's high graduation rates.

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's comprehensive data is very well used in setting precise and challenging goals for students' achievement. Through regular formal and informal communication, parents are fully aware of their children's goals and the high expectations that they reflect. As one said, "We know that a '70' is good in other schools but here, it's a failing score." Parents feel completely involved and are tremendously proud of the rapid progress that the school helps their children to make.

Information from previous assessments is viewed alongside the outcomes of the student 'Bridge Program' in setting baseline academic and social expectations, particularly focused on English language arts, math and science. This combination of previous and current information allows the school to set predictions and, even more importantly, very high expectations of student achievement and, as the principal said, in "finding out how high the ceiling is." That the school is accurate in its prediction of student potential is shown by the close match between projected performance and actual achievement. At whole school and departmental level, regular and highly focused discussions between teachers, support staff and school leaders take place, using data from interim assessments. This promotes a high degree of shared knowledge about individual students and groups who require different levels of support and extra assistance. Rapid and targeted interventions ensure that they make excellent gains from low starting points. At a whole school level, the small size of the school and clarity of communications ensure that all staff are aware of the part that they have in securing strategic change to boost student achievement. This is exemplified well when the school made sure that all staff were involved in the review and modification of the school's homework policy. As a result, it was implemented smoothly and within the required time

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 curriculum is planned clearly, and is thoroughly aligned with requirements. Across the school, the curriculum is designed to maximize the opportunities available for students to learn through areas that reflect their interests and capacity. There is, for example, a strong focus on pre-medical and pre-law courses that, alongside the successful building of college awareness, enthuse students and add to their motivation. The school has developed good quality links between subjects, such as art, math and science, so that the skills learned in one are applied in others. English language arts are seen as a driver for learning across all subjects. In-house data shows that the school's careful modifications to the English language arts curriculum to accommodate the needs of the history syllabus have borne fruit in increased achievement in both areas. Enrichment programs are comprehensive and highly effective. They are precisely planned following the school's analysis of students' needs and include a strong emphasis on building basic skills of literacy and comprehension. Any possible slippage in student achievement is picked up quickly and student needs are addressed through the school's pre-testing program. The re-alignment of the school's homework policy has strengthened assessment and reinforced high expectations. Work is now set precisely from each day's lessons, tested the following day, and the subsequent day's work planned according to student achievement in this. This has improved the immediacy of assessment to a high degree, and has further embedded the already strong sense of accountability felt by teachers for their students' success. The school is now considering using similar good practice in providing further support for longer-term projects incorporating skills from different subjects.

Teachers respond well to the school's expectation that they make use of data in understanding their students' needs and capabilities. They scaffold skills and understanding well within class through, for example, differentiated intervention and questioning. The school knows that more consistency is needed in this and is continuing well-focused training for staff, for example, in setting precise aims for lessons. There is a very good range of support provision to ensure that students have full access to learning whatever their capability and starting point. These features have made sure that students are strongly motivated and know that they are respected and very well supported by all the adults in the school. Attendance is high because of the level of success that is promoted for students, but also because of the very high emphasis placed on ensuring students' regular attendance. Systems are comprehensive and include home collection where necessary. As one student observed, "We have to learn here, the principal doesn't give us a choice!"

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 school's professional development is well planned according to identified curricular and academic needs. As a high school it is comparatively small but the principal has

made leadership development a very high priority. In combination with the successful work that has been undertaken in identifying and sharing good lesson practice, the school has worked toward developing teachers' skill in differentiating instruction. This has ensured that monitoring and support are undertaken against a background of shared understanding. The very high quality of staff discussion in formal and informal meetings demonstrates the degree to which the school is thoroughly committed to improvement. Across the school, there are thorough and well planned strategies of monitoring, support, and guidance. The principal has an excellent understanding of the quality of instruction and he has ensured that this is used well in informing pre-conferencing, lesson observation and feedback. Regular meetings between senior leaders focus on what has been learned from these observations, and what action needs to be taken. As a result, teachers describe the tremendous support that they receive from leaders and department heads, and its impact on their practice. Staff collaboration is high and results in a good level of learning from inter-visitations.

The leadership provided by the principal is excellent and fully exemplifies the commitment and high expectations seen throughout the school. Teachers describe the rigor of the hiring process and the degree to which they are held firmly to account for their students' learning. At the same time, they know that they benefit from being supported by leaders who are acknowledged as skilled educators, for example, in the regular modeling of lessons. The principal has taken the lead in building excellent relationships with the community and has ready access to the range of services that it needs to support its students.

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 school makes very good use of data from student assessments, complemented by information derived from observations and the range of focused discussion, to build a very good understanding of students' achievement. This is well used in setting goals for their achievement, progress towards which is then tracked carefully. Following revision of the school's policy, even homework is now used in tracking students' progress by providing excellent support for ongoing assessment. Report cards that are completed for each marking period are well used in informing discussion between the principal, senior staff and teachers. As a result, modifications to students' programs are made in a precise and timely way, with a very positive impact on their performance.

There are significant strengths in the school's strategies for analyzing its performance and planning for improvement. School plans for improvement are prepared well and leaders, following the principal's inspirational lead, provide a seamless layer of day-to-day support. Regular meetings between the principal and curriculum leaders are well informed by interim assessment data in identifying the degree to which plans are on track and where modifications may be required. In this way, the school has assured that it accurately identifies the developing impact of initiatives and targets resources or interventions well, according to the degree of success that has been achieved through the year.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Bedford Academy 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