



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Benjamin Banneker Academy

High School 670

**71 - 77 Clinton Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11205**

Principal: Daryl Rock

Dates of review: March 3 - 4, 2008

Lead Reviewer: George Wallace

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Benjamin Banneker Academy is a high school with 907 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 77% Black, 13% Hispanic, 2% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes no English language learners and 1% special education students. Boys account for 40% of the students enrolled and girls account for 60%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 88%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 50% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school runs extremely efficiently and smoothly and provides a high quality, broad and stimulating education for its students.
- The principal and school community have a clear vision for the future of this school and are successful in their work towards achieving excellence.
- Students are very well supported, work in a warm family environment and have extremely positive attitudes towards their work and learning.
- Parents are well informed about their child's progress and both student and parental support for the school is extremely strong.
- The school collects and efficiently uses a wide range of performance and other data to promote improvements in student progress and performance.
- The school offers a very wide range of courses including an enormous range of clubs and activities involving the community and other external partnerships
- Teachers are highly committed to raising student achievement and therefore lessons are well planned, engaging and responsive to students' individual needs.
- Expectations for students to do well are extremely high and as a consequence, students' self-esteem, confidence and aspirations are raised.
- The school is an extremely valuable resource to its students and wider community providing learning and leisure facilities seven days a week.
- Goal setting exists at a variety of scales and works well to promote school improvements because progress towards such goals is tracked.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance the process of induction for new teachers, for example, by incorporating a formal teacher mentor for each new member of staff
- Sharpen the process of school development planning and in particular, by identifying on the plan, the times and ways in which goals are to be evaluated during and at the end of the school year planning cycle.
- Broaden teachers' skills with regard to the interpretation of data paying particular attention to pattern and trend analysis.

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.

This is a very popular school. It provides a high-quality, broad and stimulating education for students. It has a warm family environment that helps raise self-esteem, builds confidence, increases personal aspirations and generally broadens students' horizons. Teachers are effective and parents and students know that teachers "go more than the extra mile" to help, support, advise and coach students no matter the subject or scenario. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. Students are conscientious, respond positively and show commitment in their classes. This is a school where it is "cool to learn". The principal has a very clear vision for the school. It is a successful institution and works on the basis of continuous improvement. Consequently the percentage of students graduating has continued to improve and is now extremely high as is the number of students going on to college. Scheduling is thorough and meets the needs of all students. Junior and senior students have opportunities to study in advanced placement classes as well as participate in college courses. The school collects and uses a wide range of data. Teachers use data to aid their planning, incorporating strategies of differentiation. It is a reflective school and therefore knows its strengths and areas requiring improvement. End-of-year and interim evaluations sometimes bring about changes in strategy. For example, results arising from an effective inquiry team identified students who were frequently late and subsequent discussions led to procedures that are having a positive impact on students' time-keeping and assessment scores. Data has also revealed that few students applied for Ivy League places or other top colleges. To redress this anomaly, a research program in association with New York University is underway. The school knows how it wishes to develop, but compared to other school systems its planning documentation is sparse. There is no clear and succinct whole school improvement plan outlining precise single, achievable and measurable goals that are time related with interim evaluation points. The last review identified ten areas for improvement. All have been successfully addressed. For example, attendance has improved, teachers and senior leaders interpret and use data more effectively and the school has increased the breadth of its curriculum including providing students with several advanced placement courses.

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 uses good-quality quantitative and qualitative data. This

information is used well at a variety of scales, from teachers working with individual students to the analysis of whole-school data, such as graduation rates, college placements and also subject scores, including end of marking period results and Regents examination results. Such information allows for specific teams to investigate the issues shown in the data. For example, it was noted that in chemistry, a subject that is taken by nearly every student, examination results were significantly below pass rates in other subjects. After analysis of the situation an imaginative program was put in place which secured an improvement in results. The principal and assistant principals receive progress and performance data on a frequent basis. This allows them to discuss specific classes and students with subject teachers. In addition, it allows for department discussion of data to ensure students are on track for success.

At whole-school level, for example through the work of the inquiry team, and in some cases through the work of the senior leaders, analysis of data has revealed patterns. In terms of patterns of achievement between male and female students the difference is insignificant. Such analysis is relatively new and item analysis, in particular, is strong and is used to good effect by teachers to ensure students are progressing at least at expected rates. However, there is no evidence showing that teacher look for patterns or trends in their data. Special education students are well served. Their assessment scores are monitored and used to both drive instruction and also as a catalyst for conversations with students about their progress. A large proportion of the special education students meet graduation requirements. The principal is acutely aware of students' performance data for similar, and also of other, high schools. Teachers visit other schools and turnkey information. Staff have received basic training in data analysis and use it as appropriate in their departments, but the overall program of data interpretation and use has not been completed.

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.

Planning is widespread across the school. However, much planning stems from ideas and situations that arise throughout the school year as opposed to scheduled planning for, say, a new school year. Apart from the principal's personal goals, there is no written long-term, whole-school plan for development. Consequently, staff are not fully aware of the core priorities of the school. Interim evaluations of school data, together with outcomes from surveys and soft data are, however, the bedrock of the school's development. Therefore different teams work to secure improvements in a variety of areas, some working towards measurable goals for improvement and others on specific tasks with no formal, measurable criteria for success. This approach works successfully.

Senior leaders are acutely aware of the progress and performance of students. They are in frequent formal and informal conversation with teachers and therefore know who and why specific students are performing as they are. Subsequent discussions determine the next steps for individual students, groups and whole classes. Interventions include after-school support, the Saturday Academy, new courses or placements beyond school. All students work to an individualized program. Procedures are in place, together with a school-wide culture of care and support, to ensure that students in greatest need of improvement are well served. Parents and students know

that staff have extremely high expectations of students' personal, social and academic development. Displays and procedures emphasize effort as the route to success. The notion of effort is at the heart of the school culture. Communication with parents is extremely good. They are very satisfied with the frequency and ease of communications with the school, including notification of their child's progress and performance. Many features of the school's work, especially college applications and attendance at school, ensure that direct communication with parents is commonplace.

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 generates a vast quantity of manageable information that is used efficiently to ensure that no student falls behind. Senior leaders and other staff are quick to detect those students whose progress is too slow. Staff discuss strategies to overcome the initial difficulties and devise individual programs for those students. Equally strong is the school's focus on higher achieving students. The school has been quick to respond to their needs, in particular, by providing 10 advanced placement programs, honors classes and opportunities for students to participate in college courses. The curriculum is broad and engaging. Students have opportunities to follow a wide range of Regents courses and, in addition, programs in media, materials technology, computers, art, music, dance and two foreign languages are offered. There is also a vast range of school clubs, some linked with student visits to Ghana, South Africa, Brazil and other countries around the world. The high-quality curriculum and ways of teaching provide a well-rounded education that broadens students' horizons. Everywhere in the school there is a very strong environment of mutual trust and respect.

Teachers know they are accountable for students' progress. They also know that they are part of a team that works to enhance the school's culture of learning, which is focused on raising students' self-esteem, confidence, aspirations and knowledge and understanding of their heritage. Teaching is interactive and elements are suitably differentiated to ensure all students' needs are met. Teachers are good at relating their instruction to relevant situations and contemporary events. Above all students enjoy their lessons and enjoy learning. The budget, staff hiring and scheduling are successfully managed and meet students' needs leading to school improvement. Attendance and lateness are monitored well. These procedures are working successfully to increase attendance and decrease lateness through arrangements that bring truant and tardy students closer to certain teachers who stay in close contact with parents.

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 senior leaders know their school very well. They observe lessons and walk through their school frequently. The purpose of such class visits varies, as does the degree of

notice given for such visits. Feedback is provided in ways to support teachers and their professional development. In response to a survey of teachers, a professional development committee was set up to enhance the quality of training. This is well supported by staff since they feel that training is more focused, targeted well and based exclusively on need identified from various sources, not least, statistical data. Teachers take opportunities to visit each others' classes as well as to make visits to other schools. This is a reflective school and although teachers work in departments, they also work across grades and discussion about pedagogy is common. New teachers are very well supported through the informal networks of the school. These are strong and part of the positive culture of collaboration between teachers. While there is some formal support, there is no formal internal mentor or buddy identified.

The school runs extremely smoothly. At change-over times students walk purposefully to their next lesson and the atmosphere is one of politeness, trust and respect. Guidance for students is very strong. There is peer mentoring, alumni make visits to discuss with students their future opportunities. Counsellors know and support individuals extremely well and teachers give their time freely to students, including at Saturday School. The academy has a wealth of effective partnerships with community organizations and businesses. There are also wider New York links with colleges, sports clubs, medical centers and other educational centers such as museums.

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.

At the end of each school year the senior leaders take time out to formally discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The process is akin to a formal evaluation. However, there is no single school plan documenting improvement goals that are analyzed. There is also no formalized cycle of planning. At the same time, the senior leaders know their school extremely well and work to a series of goals. Some goals are set at the beginning of the school year and others are a product of interim evaluations of plans and existing procedures. The outcomes of such evaluations produce conclusions that are either numeric, such as student examination performance details or qualitative data that can be interpreted for success against the original targets set. This method shows that it works effectively for the current personnel of the school. The process is similar for departments and while there are measurable goals set for percentage improvement on Regents examination passes over the previous year, there is no formal departmental plan for which subject teachers have ownership. However, the assistant principals who lead departments are effective in driving discussion which has led to significant improvements and therefore a general trend of rising standards. Teachers often and regularly assess students' performance. The outcomes are supplied to senior leaders at the end of each marking period and any necessary changes made in the pursuit of higher standards. Agreed procedures across the school help ensure that new developments are evaluated and next steps for individual students, departments and for the whole school are taken. The principal and school community have a clear vision for the development of the school. At the heart of the school's culture for learning is the principle of striving for success no matter the adversity. The principal is strongly focused on ensuring that all students receive a high-quality education and that students show their commitment to success through strong levels of effort.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Benjamin Banneker Academy	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?				*	
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

Key: * there are no English language learners in this school.

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