



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Bloomingdale School

Elementary School 145

**150 West 105 Street
New York
NY 10025**

Principal: Ivelisse Alvarez

Dates of review: January 15 - 16, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Angela Cook

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bloomington School is an elementary school with 528 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 32% Black, 60% Hispanic, 5% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 90%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and her assistant principals provide a strong leadership team which effectively focuses on raising achievement levels for all students.
- Effective data gathering provides robust information that underpins the school's decision making.
- Very good support for English language learners and special education students enables them to achieve well.
- Dedicated teachers have high expectations for their students and support them effectively to develop good learning skills.
- Gifted and talented students are presented with challenging opportunities in their self-contained classes.
- Personalized attention enables all students to make good progress.
- Vibrant displays of students' work enhance well-planned instruction resulting in stimulating learning environments.
- Very good professional relationships between staff and students ensure that each student feels valued.
- Students are eager to learn, take pride in their work, and say learning is fun.
- Parents appreciate the regular feedback they receive and the high-quality care that the school provides for the students.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop measurable interim indicators set within timelines in order to track the school's progress towards its goals more effectively.
- Extend data analysis to include gender differences.
- Develop greater consistency in the way in which teachers use data to inform planning and differentiate instruction.
- Use the outcomes of the teacher performance review process to inform professional development decisions.
- Consistently provide feedback for students so they know how they can improve.

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 her assistant principals provide strong leadership focused on raising achievement. There are good professional relationships throughout and teachers create stimulating learning environments. Students are eager to learn and their parents appreciate the feedback the school gives them about their children's progress. The school acknowledges it needs to ensure that students are given consistent help for them to understand how they can improve their work. There is very good support for English language learners, special education students and those who are gifted and talented.

The school has worked hard since the last Quality Review to consolidate the ways in which it analyzes and uses data. Some systems were already in place but lacked clarity and consistency. The systems and structures which are now part of the school's routines enable data to be the cornerstone in the decision-making processes which drive the school forward towards its goals. It has made good progress in all the areas identified in the last review as requiring improvement.

The greater clarity in data gathering has enabled the progress of English language learners to be demonstrated effectively. There is not yet the same in-depth analysis by gender. Well-structured collaborative planning time has enabled teachers to use the robust data to plan together to meet the needs of the students. However, there is still some inconsistency in the way in which data is used to inform planning and differentiation. The school also recognizes the need to ensure action plans have objectively measurable interim indicators set within a time frame. The data inquiry team has already made a positive start by circulating a leaflet for parents explaining its goals and focus. The leaflet illustrates clearly the importance the school places on using data to drive its initiatives forward.

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 a well-developed system for data analysis, which provides a clear overview of the performance of students in each grade, and includes a breakdown for special education students and English language learners. The data is displayed prominently so that all staff and parents are aware of the levels of achievement through

the different grades. Much data is gathered at classroom level through teacher assessments and test results. This provides very good information for the administration, so that performance and progress can be regularly analyzed by grade and class and for individual students. Levels of achievement are updated monthly, and the progress for each student is tracked from a baseline test given at the beginning of the school year. Additionally, robust monthly data collected from special education students and English language learners enables the principal and her staff to monitor progress closely. Some data analysis has been carried out to compare the performance and progress of students in different ethnic groups, but little in-depth work has been undertaken to look at differences of achievement by gender across classes and grades, and the different subject areas.

The school effectively uses comparative data when evaluating its progress toward its goals of raising students' overall levels of achievement. In a quest to identify good practice that could be used within the school, the principal took a party of staff to visit a high-achieving school with a similar make-up of students. This helped the school identify and set high, but realistic goals. The school has clearly-defined structures and routines which support the collection of good-quality, well-focused data enabling teachers to plan their instruction effectively. Schedules for whole-school and grade-level training ensure a consistent approach to data gathering across the school.

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 diligently pursues its goals of raising the level of achievement of students by using data to drive the process forward. However, not all action plans on how the school intends to meet these goals have clearly measurable outcomes that can be monitored within a well-defined timescale. Well-developed systems ensure that data is continuously renewed and reviewed so that the plans and goals are current.

Highly effective teams track student progress and provide intervention for those who are in need of more support, both academically and in terms of their personal development. Escalation of support for students is facilitated by a spreadsheet showing all the support services in place for each individual, and this enables a speedy realignment of services to meet identified needs. Tests are re-administered to check that all students have been placed in the appropriate groups. Knowledge sharing across the teams is very well managed, ensuring that information is current and that a cohesive school-wide approach is maintained.

The school is expanding the use of high-quality feedback to provide students with a clear understanding about how to improve their work. Some good practice exists, but the school is aware that this is not routinely applied across the school. Good communications with parents enable the sharing of information about students to be a two-way process. Parents say the school's high expectations for each student are demonstrated by the way each is encouraged "to do even better and go beyond grade level".

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 school uses curriculum programs, carefully aligned to the standards, which are capable of delivering high-quality data about each student’s performance and progress. Individual goals and the means of achieving these are incorporated. This rich array of data is used effectively by teachers to plan their instruction to meet the needs of their students. Additionally, assessment reports generated from test papers show areas where students have achieved less well. This analysis enables teachers to revisit specific areas of work in order to extend students’ knowledge and understanding and, as one teacher put it, to “re-jig the puzzle”.

Teachers are held accountable through the school’s performance management process, which incorporates goal setting for the individual teacher based on a review of their class data. Well-planned instruction enables students to participate fully in lessons and to take ownership of their learning. Clear classroom routines, together with good professional relationships between students and staff, result in positive, work-focused learning environments where all are able to enjoy success. The school readily acknowledges that the use of student data to inform teachers’ planning of differentiated instruction so that each individual student’s needs are fully met, is not consistently applied across the entire school in all lessons. In the best practice the data is used to provide tailor-made learning for individual students, but at other times the information is used merely to identify a level for group work.

Using classroom data, teachers identified students who would benefit from increased challenges, and combining this information with longer-term tracking data, groups have been selected for self-contained classes. These classes focus closely on meeting the needs of the gifted and talented students. Throughout the school class sizes have been kept small in order to support personalized learning. One appreciative parent described this as providing a “country school feeling.” The principal and her assistants see this use of resources as fundamental in meeting the changing needs of the student population. Good systems, including bi-weekly team meetings, are in place to increase the attendance rate even further.

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 effectively monitors and evaluates the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school by analyzing good-quality data from different sources, which enable cross-checking to take place. Information gathered from informal and formal lesson observations by the principal and her senior team is correlated with a wealth of data collected in the teachers’ assessment binders, and with the outcomes of focused scrutiny of student work.

The effective review of teaching enables a program to be drawn up to strengthen instruction even further. This reflects the identified needs of each member of staff. The differentiation of professional development is strengthened by the school's performance management review process which encourages teachers to reflect on their needs. There is little evidence yet to show how this information is translated into strategic decisions so that the goals of both the teachers and the students can be met. Teachers' grade-planning time is well structured. Minutes kept from the last meetings enable them to build effectively on previous sessions. Through mentoring programs and support from colleagues during grade meetings, the school effectively supports teachers who are new to the profession.

Skilled monitoring and evaluation of data ensure that students are well supported by a coordinated series of strategies managed by the service providers. The school's well-established procedures strengthen a calm, purposeful learning environment where all students feel valued. A wide variety of good-quality partnerships with outside organizations and programs provide much enrichment of the curriculum for students at all grades. One initiative enables students to learn to read music and play the piano, and another one provides opportunities to meet authors and discuss their work.

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 proficient.

The robust nature and wide variety of data have provided the school leaders with a clear overview of the school's strengths and the areas where it needs to improve. The Comprehensive Education Plan, drawn up by the school's proactive senior leadership team, informs goal setting throughout the school. Although some plans do have well-defined interim goals and a timeline, this is not consistent across all planning. The absence of these interim goals and timelines does not impede on the school's ability to monitor its progress, because of the well-developed practice established in the school over time. It does, however, restrict the evaluation of ongoing progress and consequently its ability to revise plans immediately. The absence of these elements within the planning process means that the outcomes of the regular reports by teachers to the principal and her assistant principals depend upon their adept skills of analysis. The school leaders are eager to develop further their action plans to incorporate these tools in order to expedite the review process.

The good data has enabled effective strategic decisions to be made. Teachers and parents are canvassed through questionnaires in order to ascertain ways of improving school practice. Using this data, the extended day program was moved so that now it takes place before school, providing very good learning opportunities. This has played an important part in supporting students in meeting their goals. Support teams evaluate thoroughly the effectiveness of the various programs and intervention strategies provided for different students and groups of students. The systems by which data is shared across the teams are very effective.

The whole school community has a very clear shared vision for the school. Senior leaders have initiated successful procedures and systems to move the school towards its goals of raising student achievement levels.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Bloomingdale 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 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

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