



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Bilingual Bicultural Mini School

Elementary School 182

**219 East 109th Street
New York
NY 10029**

Principal: Andrea Hernandez

Dates of review: April 7 - 8, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Ted Solow

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Bilingual Bicultural Mini School is an elementary school with 433 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 8% Black, 91% Hispanic, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 26% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 96% eligibility.

The school shares building space with another school's elementary school, including classrooms on two floors, which impacts on the principal's ability to implement a full range of co- and extra-curricular activities. One unique feature of the school is a "Say Yes to Education" grant that provides in-school reading and counselling support services to a cohort of students, and will cover the cost of their full four-year college tuition.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal articulates a clear vision for high achievement and holds herself and her teachers accountable for student learning.
- Data is effectively used to understand trends and patterns in student learning resulting in improved achievement.
- Students are well known across classes and grades, thereby encouraging mutual trust and respect.
- Effective systems are in place to manage resources in support of student learning.
- Teachers and administrators work in a highly collegial and collaborative community that increases personal and professional growth.
- The professional development program is differentiated well to support the needs and experience levels of the staff.
- The academic intervention services team makes excellent use of data to support at-risk learners.
- Uniformity of curriculum, differentiated learning strategies, and flexible grouping provide engaging, challenging classroom activities.
- Outside partnerships effectively support the high quality arts, recreation, and academic assistance programs during and after school.
- High expectations are illustrated through displays of rubrics, student work samples and curriculum themes.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop an interim progress reporting system to keep parents better informed between the report card cycles.
- Expand inter-school visits with similar and peer horizon schools in order to observe and share best practices.

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 Bilingual Bicultural Mini School is located in the heart of “El Barrio” in East Harlem. The school serves bilingual and monolingual students in a warm, caring and nurturing environment. The principal, a dynamic educator, leads a family of collegial and collaborative teachers who together recognize they are responsible for student achievement and learning. Teachers are very adept at gathering and using data to inform their instructional practices, as well as establishing data-driven achievement goals with their students in the core curriculum areas. Grade teams work collaboratively, with assistance from support staff, to analyze data, develop differentiated instructional strategies, prepare units of study and techniques to provide excellent teaching and learning conditions in their classrooms. Conferencing sessions, along with comprehensive running records, enable teachers to understand patterns and trends in the progress of students and classes. The academic intervention services team successfully uses data to identify, remediate, and assess progress for at-risk students.

The high-quality professional development program differentiates activities to support the staff, as well as the diverse needs of the students. At this time, the school does not visit with other schools to engage in the sharing of best practices. The well-designed programs in art, music, academic enrichment, recreation and health are well supported by outside partnerships. A well-attended second grade swimming program is an example of a successful collaboration with a local YMCA. The school proudly acknowledges student successes and high expectations through print rich hallways and classroom displays. The school has shown steady growth on formal assessments, moving English language learners towards proficiency and enabling students to achieve higher levels of mastery in English and Spanish. To keep parents better informed, the school acknowledges the need to share progress data in between report card cycles.

The school has addressed the areas for improvement from last year’s Quality Review. Teachers meet regularly with coaches to discuss innovative ways to address students’ learning needs. Goal-setting activities between administrators and teachers are a regular collaborative practice. Group-evaluation processes are in place to effectively review and revise school plans. The inquiry team is studying 18 students who did not earn a one-year gain on the 4th grade State English language arts exam last year. Effective analysis of school data and attendance records indicated the need for additional help in making comparisons and in higher order thinking tasks. The students receive appropriate interventions services daily from support staff. Predictive and performance assessments reveal that this group is now showing good progress.

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.

Teachers effectively gather and use data from formative and summative sources as well as the Acuity program to form a good picture of individual student and class performance and progress. Teachers are adept at using data from student conferencing sessions and running records in the core-curriculum subjects to address successfully their instructional practices, and to design differentiated instructional strategies and activities for their classes. Each teacher maintains, and continually updates, an assessment binder. The principal and assistant principal review the binders at regular intervals in order to monitor individual student, class, grade and whole school patterns and trends. Teachers use data to identify student strengths and weaknesses especially students who are struggling. The team and the principal carefully monitor and keep parents abreast of student progress every four weeks. The principal effectively monitors student performance data for each subgroup of interest in the school. Particular attention is paid to the large numbers of English language learners and the support they receive to enable them to become English language proficient.

The principal uses school and District data effectively to make 5-year longitudinal studies of student performance and progress. Data indicates this school is achieving excellent gains in moving English language learners forward and raising the achievement levels of the lowest-performing students when making comparisons with neighborhood schools. The school makes comparisons with several schools with similar demographic data. However, there are not enough interschool visitations with peer horizon schools to enable staff to observe and share best practices, and widen the range of school comparisons.

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 principal sets broad academic goals for the whole school that serve as effective guidelines for individual class goal-setting activities. Teachers effectively collaborate with administrators and service providers to set specific grade and class goals with appropriate timeframes and achievement benchmarks. Student learning goals are set after assessing individual needs. Students and teachers set target goals in the core subject areas during weekly conferencing sessions. Students knowledgeably articulate reading and math levels, the learning goals they set with their teachers and the next steps they have to complete to reach the goals.

Goal-setting activities are an integral part of the school's academic program and are built into the instruction. This year, all classes are setting goals that focus on expanding writing volume with specific goals for students who are not making appropriate grade level progress. Teachers identify struggling students early in the year and make

referrals to the academic intervention services (AIS) team. The AIS team effectively analyzes student data to identify the specific needs of struggling students and, working with the parents, prepares well-developed action plans to address and remediate areas of concern. Teachers also pay close attention to higher-performing students by providing rigorous and challenging differentiated lessons in order to boost their learning. The principal is proactive in keeping all members of the school community aware of school goals, plans and events. Periodic report cards provide parents with information regarding student progress and testing results. There is no uniform interim progress reporting system to keep parents better informed during the gaps between report card cycles.

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 core curriculum follows City and State mandates incorporating engaging, challenging lessons. All classes use the workshop instructional model, and literacy classes employ components of the Teachers College instructional model. Social studies and science subject matter is successfully integrated into well-planned lessons in English language arts and math. Excellent curriculum maps and action plans align diverse instructional activities to meet student needs and the learning continuum. Many well-embedded art, music, chorus, dance and physical education activities effectively support the design of the academic program.

Teachers use computer laptops to motivate and support classroom activities. Reinforcement of school-wide goals to increase the volume of writing activities and accountable talk are successfully infused in lessons and classroom activities. This results in increased student ownership of their learning. The principal holds teachers accountable and recognizes it is a joint responsibility to ensure student progress and achievement. Teachers effectively challenge students to reach their highest potential through targeted, differentiated lessons. Students articulate performance levels, goals and steps they are taking with their teacher to achieve their goals. There are high levels of mutual trust and respect among staff and students. A student stated, “I love my principal because she makes me feel safe.” High-quality systems to manage resources are in place. Hiring of bilingual support personnel and paraprofessionals to provide academic assistance in key areas of the school added another dimension to the academic program. Acknowledging the need to increase technology in the school, additional resources were designated to support this program.

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 effective professional development program varies and tailors activities to meet teachers’ needs and experience levels. The principal encourages and supports teachers’ attendance at City and State meetings that result in strengthened teacher skills to support student learning. The teachers participate in many art and cultural forums in support of the bilingual and bicultural aims and goals of the school. Administrators visit

classes daily to observe engagement levels, accountable talk, questioning techniques and to hold teachers responsible for continued student achievement. Teachers receive timely feedback after each visit. Teachers indicated that the principal is highly respected as an educator because, "She walks in our shoes every day." The high level of collaborative activities among teachers, working in grade teams, allows for effective planning, goal reviews, analysis of data and creation of differentiated instructional activities. The school does not use intervisitations routinely to support the sharing of ideas and successful teaching strategies.

Good systems are in place to support student growth and development. Excellent counseling services prepare students for the middle school selection process that results in many graduates being accepted into specialized middle school programs. Students proudly wear their uniforms and show respect to their peers. The principal clearly articulates all school procedures and policies, which all know and follow, resulting in a calm, orderly learning environment. Outside partnerships support programs that reflect the school's goals and support student learning. Mount Sinai Hospital provides health-care services to students and their families and Museo del Barrio effectively supports the school's bicultural and bilingual themes.

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 collaborative school team develops goals and objectives, schedules for targets, and benchmarks and timeframes for achievement levels of the students in the core curriculum areas. Excellent procedures are in place to monitor whole school, grade, class and individual student goals and objectives. Through effective analysis of performance data, the principal meets with each teacher three times a year to discuss and plan for time adjustments, modifications to improve teaching and learning and the next steps required to advance achievement levels for the students. This results in her having an accurate view of the school's performance.

Teachers plan effectively and make timely adjustments to their instructional programs in order to increase student performance and progress. Grade teams meet with coaches, service providers and administrators to review predictive and interim assessment data, running records, conferencing notes and individual and class progress data. As a result, teachers revise plans to enhance classroom instruction that enable students to reach higher achievement levels. Teacher reviews and understandings of the implication of how data informs instruction enable the school to show steady longitudinal growth in student performance levels, enabling more students to become proficient English language learners and offering high-level differentiated instruction to the academically gifted students.

The school community has a clear vision. It includes advancement of the educational program of the whole child using higher order thinking skills, problem solving and learning strategies through incorporation of 21st century technology. The school is working hard to achieve this vision.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Bilingual Bicultural Mini 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