



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**John Bowne High School**

**High School 425**

**63-25 Main Street**

**Queens**

**NY 11367**

**Principal: Howard Kwait**

**Dates of review: October 11 - 12, 2007**

**Reviewers: Cheryl Baker**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

John Bowne High School is a high school with 3181 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 23% Black, 46% Hispanic, 5% White and 23% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year is 80%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 71% eligibility.

The school's population exceeds capacity, necessitating a staggered schedule with three distinct starting and ending times. This has program-wide ramifications. The school is also undergoing renovations, which impact on the use of the facility.

A special feature of the school is its extensive and long-standing agricultural program, the only one of its kind in the New York City. Over 500 students concentrate in one of several agricultural disciplines offered by the school. In addition, the school offers concentrations in writing, scientific research and the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school's curricular and extracurricular programs provide opportunities for exploration and growth well beyond the core academic courses.
- The school has used data effectively in creating and restructuring programs for freshmen, English language learners and special education students.
- Increased accountability and extensively restructured practices have improved attendance procedures school-wide.
- Student support services and partnerships with outside entities are integral to the school's ability to serve the broad needs of its diverse population.
- The school culture is a safe environment for learning that engenders mutual respect and trust among students, teachers and administrators.
- Astute budgetary decisions and fiscal management have broadened access to instructional materials and increased the capacity for data analysis and use.

### What the school needs to improve

- Engage all members of the school community in creating a plan for school-wide academic improvement with measurable targets for growth.
- Share school improvement plans widely so as to garner broad support for improvement efforts and elevate high expectations for student achievement.
- Increase goal-setting practices to include academic achievement plans for all staff and review progress on reaching stated goals regularly.
- Train administrators and teachers in the use of student achievement data to plan for differentiated instruction based on the needs of individual students.
- Extend the development of departmental formative and summative assessments across all disciplines.
- Increase the direct supervision of instruction with a sharp focus on effective teaching techniques.

## 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 proficient.

Since the last Quality Review the school has successfully addressed weaknesses in its attendance procedures, has reduced class sizes for English language learners to provide more individualized instruction and has identified funding to support improvements in instructional technology and information management. Some increases in common planning time have occurred.

The principal and his administrative team make good use of the analysis of the available data especially in identifying populations in most need of improvement and creating remedial structures. The school has wisely identified personnel with data expertise to supplement its capacity to understand each student's needs. Goals for improvement are generalized at the whole school and department level but are not supported by clear plans and timeframes to foster their successful attainment. The school has formed its inquiry team and has begun purposeful analysis of the available data pertaining to their target group of students.

Students are well supported by a network of resources and partnerships. They benefit from broad and interesting curricular and extracurricular offerings that challenge and extend their horizons. Mutual trust and respect amongst staff and students are a strong feature of the school. Instruction is not consistently differentiated to ensure that all students' learning needs are well met. Increased direct supervision of teachers and focused training in techniques for differentiating instruction remains a goal.

### 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 proficient.

The school makes good use of the available assessment data to provide administrators and teachers with current information regarding the performance of students, classrooms, grade levels and academic subjects. Scholarship reports and the analysis of Regents examinations are used well to identify areas of instructional weakness or intervention needs. Teachers receive copies of student's transcripts to gain a broader understanding of their students. The school looks forward to greater access to data that will allow deeper analysis and has prepared for this by hiring a data specialist and by forming a school-wide technology team to support the increased use of technology for analysis and instruction.

The progress of special education students is monitored carefully and in accordance with their individual education plans. The school has increased the number of collaborative team teaching settings to provide these students with increased access to the regular education curriculum in an effort to increase their academic performance. The school has also used its data regarding the progress of English language learners to make dramatic changes to their instructional programs, including the reduction in their class sizes. Their progress is informed by regular assessments of their English language acquisition, which is showing improvement. The school also analyses the comparative performance of ethnic groups and has begun to study the relationship among ethnicity and students' other sub-group designations, as they affect adequate yearly progress. The school has not compared the performance of boys and girls.

The school is proud to have improved its social reputation and is focused on continued academic improvement. The principal, in particular, is keenly aware of the measurement of the progress of his students. He looks to high performing schools as his point of reference and comparison, rather than those identified as similar.

**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 proficient.**

The school's overall goals for improving achievement in math and English are well understood. Each academic department has also identified goals. These are not widely shared across the school, though. The Comprehensive Education Plan is modified annually based on Regents results but its contents are not a routine source of guidance for the school. The school lacks an overarching plan for reaching its goals that includes actions, timeframes and incremental measures of progress that is shared with all members of the school community.

The large percent of students entering grade 9 at Levels 1 and 2 led the school to plan for the dramatic redesign of the freshman program to create small learning communities. Teachers are provided with professional development in best practices for teaching these underachieving students. In its second year, this program is showing promise. The assignment of credits and increased instructional time in math and English has also improved students' chances for success. Data indicating that special education students and English language learners were not performing as expected led to plans that resulted in reductions in class sizes, the shift to collaborative team teaching and the increases in supports and interventions for these students.

The school's motto, "The Relentless Pursuit of Success", has communicated high expectations to all students. The principal, in particular, is a forceful champion of this battle cry. Communications between the school and homes has improved and the appointment of a new bi-lingual parent coordinator has been well received. Parents feel welcome in the school. They receive information on student progress through report cards and teachers' conferences. Attendance and behavioral expectations are well understood. The school's website and teacher e-mail are additional sources of information.

**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's curricular and extracurricular programs are extensive, well organized and provide students with unique, broad and engaging opportunities for learning. The core curriculum is appropriately focused on State testing requirements and incorporates opportunities for gaining interim data about students' learning. Current written curricula for all disciplines guide instruction and underpin accountability for teachers. Instruction is generally interesting and increasingly inclusive. While students' performance on tests, quizzes and projects informs instruction, differentiation is largely limited to varied activities within lessons. Some, but not all disciplines administer common examinations as a method of ensuring instructional accountability and gaining additional diagnostic information about student learning.

The school's extensive agricultural concentration is unique in the City and attracts hundreds of students with its numerous avenues for study. Students interested in scientific research are supported by new laboratories and outside partnerships that foster this pursuit. The school's center for writing provides another concentration for students with strengths and interests in literacy. Others may choose to access the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps program. A plethora of clubs, teams and activities further expand students' rich opportunities at the school. Students, generally, like coming to school and describe relations with teachers and administrators as trusting and respectful.

The principal has succeeded in bringing improvements to the overall operation of the school. He skillfully lobbied and won, substantial funding to support needs for data expertise and improvements in instructional technology. Staffing changes were made as a result of the analysis of student performance and instructional data. The school's schedule was adjusted to accommodate the needs of the freshmen program and increased common planning time for its teachers. Disparities in credit assignments and instructional time in English and math were corrected. The attendance procedures were restructured and increased expectations for enforcing policies and practices have resulted in improvements in this area.

**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 proficient.**

While the principal has communicated clear instructional expectations, including differentiated instruction, the size of the staff and the demands of his role limit his capacity to engage in frequent classroom observations. This responsibility is delegated to the assistant principals whose supervisory focus varies from an emphasis on content to the development of instructional skills. The school's professional development has moved from a concentration on effective element of instruction to topics informed by data, such as the current emphasis developing students' literacy skills. The school has secured the services of an expert in this field to provide training and coaching support to teachers. Other professional development activities support the move to more inclusive education for special education students and the institution of the freshman program.

The school's staggered schedule presents challenges with respect to collaboration and intervisitations. However, administrators accommodate the need to bring the faculty and departments together for sharing and planning by holding three faculty conferences and department meetings each month so that all teachers can attend. Groups of teachers such as those teaching in the freshmen program, those who teach collaboratively and teachers of English language learners do meet to collaborate on their specific initiatives. Intervisitations have been piloted among special education teachers and members of the physical education department. Teachers new to the profession and the school are mentored by a retired staff member, who follows the expectations of the City's mentor program.

The school has worked hard to improve its culture and climate and has succeeded in re-establishing an environment that effectively supports learning, communicates clear procedures and runs smoothly. Within this context, students benefit from a wide network of programs and personnel that support their academic, social and emotional growth. The school's practice of assigning guidance personnel to its various areas of concentration allows students to build effective relationships with adults who know them well. The school's extensive relationships with outside entities in the fields of business, higher education, athletics and professional development further extend the school's capacity to address the academic and personal needs of 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 proficient.**

The principal has successfully focused the school's efforts on raising scores in English and math, improving the graduation rate and is rallying efforts in the "Relentless Pursuit of Success". These goals for improving student outcomes are not supported by plans that specify measurable interim targets or define timelines for judging progress. Goals for improving teacher outcomes are informed by regular monitoring of student performance on State tests. Teachers in a few academic departments engage in goal setting with their respective supervisors but this practice is not widespread.

The school is fluid and responsive to information suggesting needed change and acts swiftly to bring improvements. For example, teachers use the results of assessments to measure the effectiveness of interventions for groups such as special education students and English language learners. These have plans and educational programs specific to their needs and the results of these measures inform subsequent goal setting and planning for these students. The school's other academic interventions, such as extended day help and Saturday school are well monitored to judge their effectiveness in helping students to achieve. Plans and practices have been revised as a result of the analysis of data such as changing the sequence of Regents test administration to allow students to test and re-test earlier. World language course placement was adjusted to enable qualifying students to take Spanish Regents examinations and errors in credit accumulation practices were resolved to enable more students to stay on track for graduation. School leaders modified the school's emphasis on literacy as a result of input from all disciplines regarding students' limited reading skills. A school-wide cross-curricular initiative to increase vocabulary and reading skills has been undertaken.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: John Bowne High School (HS 425)</b>	△	▷	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>			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 . . .	△	▷	✓	+	◇
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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			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 . . .	△	▷	✓	+	◇
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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			X		

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>▷</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>					<b>X</b>

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>▷</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					<b>X</b>

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>▷</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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 make 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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					<b>X</b>