



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Bilingual School

Elementary - Middle 025

**811 East 149 Street
Bronx
NY 10455**

Principal: Miriam Martinez - Diaz

Dates of review: February 13 - 14, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Richard Woolf

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bilingual is an elementary-middle school with 490 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5 and 8, with no grades 6 or 7. The school population comprises 11% Black, 88% Hispanic, 0.1% White, and 0.1% Asian students. The student body includes 40% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for the other 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 89.3%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 94.3% eligibility.

In 2005, the school was designated to become a pre-kindergarten through grade 8 school, enrolling a new grade each year. This designation was rescinded in 2007. The school will be re-designated as a pre-kindergarten through grade 5 school from September 2008.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is experienced and well respected by staff and parents.
- The school's ability to teach its students through a dual language approach adds challenge to learning.
- The broadening of the curriculum, through the arts and Core Knowledge program is a growing feature of the school's work.
- Teachers are making good use of data to inform and improve many areas of instruction.
- The school uses its resources well to ensure the maintenances of small classes as an aid to student learning.
- The rates of attendance are improving due to a very close monitoring system.
- A very good induction program supports new teachers feel welcome and valued.
- The staff works hard in a collaborative way to help improve student outcomes.
- The school has implemented procedures to improve behavior which is welcomed by parents.
- The work of the school's support services is important to student's emotional development.

What the school needs to improve

- Inject greater rigor into the analysis of data and the way it is used to raise performance and accelerate progress.
- Set realistic, achievable but challenging goals for all students and student groups, including special education students and English language learners.
- Identify the higher achieving students in each grade by data analysis and challenge them to achieve Level 4 in English language arts and math.
- Set specific teacher goals, with benchmarks and times frames that improve overall instruction and school performance.
- Ensure the best instructional practice, including the use of differentiation, is shared across the entire faculty.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The principal manages the school well. She is passionate about educating students through a curriculum which exposes them to teaching in two languages. This is not an easy undertaking. Data shows students make progress individually, dependant on their dominant language, but the impact upon overall school performance is not so evident. The school does not set rigorous student-specific goals for its large group of English language learners. There are a number of students who show potential to reach Level 4, but they are not yet receiving the depth of challenge to achieve these levels. The principal does acknowledge the need to further improve teacher performance but does not yet set them realistic individual goals to improve student outcomes. Parents are supportive of the efforts the teachers make in improving their children's education. More effective monitoring systems are proving successful in raising levels of attendance.

Over the last few years, with changing designation, the staff has faced many challenges particularly over student behavior. By adopting appropriate behavior modification programs, the school is now much calmer and more conducive to learning. It provides an increasingly broad curriculum for students, especially in the arts and technology as students are challenged to become effective learners. This is a move, which staff, parents and students appreciate. The work of the support services team is greatly assisting in this improvement as they provide emotional and academic support for the students.

Since the last Quality Review, there is now better use of data to assist teachers plan their instruction. Intervisitations have become more commonplace and there is improvement in strategic planning. However, the sharing of good differentiated instruction remains an area for further improvement. The inquiry team meets regularly. Through the identification of its student target group, in-depth analysis takes place of individual need and clear action plans are in place. This group is energetic and eager and its members are planning to become key motivators in showing staff how to improve student learning using data.

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 has access to a growing range of student data. It uses it better than in previous years to understand performance and progress, and inform instruction. However, the

school does not yet analyze data with sufficient rigor. A number of key staff are acting as drivers to ensure this process receives high priority over the coming months.

The school has a large number of English language learners. It does not yet have a full understanding of the progress these students make. Strategies are in place to improve their performance levels, but there is minimal impact in closing the achievement gap. The school does not yet use data to set challenging goals for each individual student in this group to demonstrate significant progress overall. The same also applies to the special education students, many of whom are English language learners. The school does look at the performance of gender groups. The data reveals girls performing at a higher level than boys especially in reading. The principal is looking to resolve the issue by purchasing more male specific books.

In looking at comparisons over time, the principal can demonstrate an increase in student progress, but not in school performance levels. A closer analysis of data shows the level of challenge for the higher achievers to be less effective in comparison with the school's successful efforts in raising the achievement of Level 1 students to Level 2. The principal compares the school to schools in the peer and similar groups and is seeking assistance from these schools to have a better understanding of how to enable her students to make better progress academically. The school is developing its use of Acuity and Scantron to track individual and whole class student progress.

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 set goals for the year within the Comprehensive Education Plan. The process is a collaborative exercise that includes staff and parents. This year a particular focus is to improve outcomes in math. Each measurable goal receives a percentage increase to demonstrate improvement. The principal recognizes that through more rigorous data analysis the goals can become more realistic and therefore more achievable. The senior leadership meets regularly and monitors how the school is progressing in achieving its goals.

Through the establishment of intervention programs for special education learners and English language learners, the school sets targets for these groups of students. The academic intervention service has charts to show student progress. However, rigorous systematic target setting on an individual student basis does not occur, which means that the school is not sure that they are making as much progress as possible. With an increase of students from countries not traditionally serviced by the school, clear plans are in place to engage those students in the learning process. Early indications show student engagement for this group to be at an acceptable level.

Sharing of the school goals takes place at a number of different levels. These include monthly parent meetings where the principal addresses concerns of a whole school nature. Parents also receive opportunities to attend a number of workshops, which focus on ways for them to engage in the learning process with their children. The parents value these as being positive and enable them to reinforce work undertaken in school. The school has an "open door" policy and teachers are available to answer parental concerns during set times of the day. This is in addition to the parent teacher conferences, which have very good attendance rates.

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 proficient.

There are a range of programs to service the bilingual needs of students and, therefore, the curriculum covers content in both English and Spanish. Dependant on which class a student attends determines whether he or she receives instruction in a monolingual, bilingual or dual language class. The principal is proud of her efforts to translate a number of leveled reading books from English into Spanish. This helps teachers better gauge reading progress, dependant upon a student’s dominant language.

The arts curriculum is helping in the development of the whole child. The Core Knowledge program is having a positive impact in integrating a number of other curriculum areas, particularly the delivery of social studies. Infusion of technology is assisting student learning occurs across the entire age range. Students in grade 8 really embrace this as being important in improving their project work. Some teachers actively differentiate their instruction and engage students in learning. This good practice is not shared across every grade.

The principal is adept in using the budget to keep class size at a minimum by the hiring of additional staff. This proves very positive for both staff and students. There are improving relationships between staff and students. The entire school community recognizes this as being positive now the boisterous behavior of middle school students is less of a factor in enabling the school to run smoothly. . The principal acknowledges the importance of student attendance. There are effective systems in place to tackle attendance issues. Outcomes since last year in this aspect of the school’s work show significant improvement. Meeting the school’s challenging attendance target is becoming a real possibility.

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.

The principal and her assistant principals undertake formal and informal observations. Each administrator has a checklist to follow and a focus for each observation. The daily “walkthroughs” provide increasing amounts of data. Teachers value the immediacy of the feedback as a means of improving their instruction. Coupled with teachers’ own requests and analysis of whole school data, the principal plans an effective, strategic program of professional development. The re-introduction of balanced literacy to the school is a good example of how this operates.

The staff work collaboratively, which is essential when delivering the curriculum in two languages. One member of staff said, “We plan so well together I feel as if I am joined to my partner’s hip.” The introduction of grade level leaders is proving very positive, especially as the school increasingly makes better use of data to inform instruction. The school has a very effective induction program to support new teachers to the school or profession. There is a planned program of intervisitation, which the staff really appreciate and which is promoting the sharing of best practice and greater consistency.

The support services provide teachers with invaluable assistance. Many students seek guidance and help from the counselors and support staff. Academic intervention services provide help in tackling remediation issues. The school acknowledges the improvements that have taken place over the last year to resolve incidents of poor behavior. A great deal of work to combat bullying is in place through the introduction of programs like “Bully Free and Star”. Parents note how more relaxed and welcoming the school has become over the past twelve months. Data supports this by the significant drop in the number of suspensions during the same period. The school works with an assortment of outside organizations to provide programs that support and enrich the students’ lives.

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 underdeveloped with proficient features.

The school’s systems of monitoring and revising its goals and targets are not yet as rigorous as other aspects of its work. The lack of rigor means that subsequent rounds of goal setting do not present sufficient challenge for individual students and student groups. The school is developing its use of Acuity and Scantron to track individual and whole class student progress. The principal sees advantages to developing the staff’s ability in using such tools to improve student outcomes. She also recognizes the need to set more specific and challenging goals for teachers that have clear benchmarks and time frames for them to demonstrate student performance and individual progress. Teachers do undertake monitoring but currently rely upon the use of qualitative data rather than quantitative data.

The principal is cognizant of the fact that the revision of goals needs to take place at regular intervals and, where necessary, makes immediate adjustments. The school has a planning cycle, which allows it to reflect upon its work over the previous year. No new plans emerge without a thorough review of what is successful allowing for the continuance of good practice. This process involves all staff and the senior leadership team. The principal has a vision for the school that all newcomers embrace the school and receive an education equipping them to become lifelong learners. Members of the school understand this and support her sentiments.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Bilingual 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