



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Bronx Dance Academy**

**Middle School 308**

**3617 Bainbridge Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10467**

**Principal: Sandra Sanchez**

**Dates of review: April 14 - 15, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Alexander Ramos**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Bronx Dance Academy is a middle school with 247 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 24% Black, 72% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% American Indian, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 12% of the students enrolled and girls account for 88%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 91.75%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 73% eligibility.

The principal was newly appointed at the beginning of the 2007-08 school year.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal knows the teachers' strengths well and provides good professional development to build further capacity for improvement.
- The school provides frequent opportunities for teachers to observe and learn from each other to improve their instructional practice.
- A collaborative learning environment has been established among teachers, which supports student progress effectively.
- The school has a wide range of good learning opportunities that include an exemplary program for the arts.
- The core curriculum facilitates good assessment opportunities to measure students' progress.
- The school has strong links with a range of partners that support students academic and personal development.
- The good climate for learning supports academic rigor in equal balance with students' social and personal development.
- The principal and faculty have very high expectations for student outcomes which they share successfully with the whole school community.

### What the school needs to improve

- Set school wide interim instructional goals for students with clear timeframes for monitoring progress.
- Make use of interim assessment information to measure progress towards school wide goals set for all students.
- Develop systems, including the use of technology, to collect and analyze data more effectively.
- Make more rigorous and regular use of data pertaining to student outcomes to plan for future developments.

## 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 is highly committed to creating a learning community where all students can achieve academically and realize their artistic potential. The school has established an inviting and caring environment to ensure that students feel secure and challenged. The arts program is a major driving force in the school. It is supported by a rigorous academic curriculum that effectively helps prepare students for high school. Students are fully engaged in classrooms as teachers provide support to help them realize success. The principal works tirelessly to ensure that all staff establish practices that will produce the best possible outcomes for students.

Caring teachers and a supportive guidance program are strong features of the school. Staff build upon these relationships to encourage good student performance and achievement. This is particularly beneficial for struggling students. Achievement among the school's special education students, English language learners and Hispanic students shows substantial increases in both English language arts and math in the last year. One of the school's goals is to replicate this achievement during the current year through further developing instructional practices among the teachers that serve this population. These efforts are also well supported through effective partnerships with outside agencies.

Strong collaborative teacher meetings ensure that efforts to raise achievement are realized through regular content area discussions. At these meetings teachers review student assessments results and curriculum planning. Teachers work well together and leaders provide many opportunities to improve their skills. Professional development is well matched to individual needs and the school's objectives. Opportunities to observe colleagues teach across subjects and disciplines are well utilized to benefit the development of effective teaching practices. The school has started to address some of the issues raised in the last Quality Review. They have made firm efforts to increase parental involvement and to develop the use of data to establish effective differentiation in the classrooms. The school has high expectations for student outcomes and effectively shares these with students and parents. Parents are very appreciative of all the school does to support their children.

The school has established an inquiry team that meets regularly to discuss issues that encourage increasingly positive learning outcomes. Although the school has implemented a curriculum that includes interim assessments, they have yet to create consistent systems for data gathering and effective analysis, goal setting, and the monitoring of student progress towards their goals.

## **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 collects various sources of data, including attendance figures, State assessments and diagnostic reading assessments in order to gauge beginning, mid year and end of year performance. Periodic assessments also provide teachers with progress indicators. However, the school does not yet have coherent structures in place to effectively identify and address the learning needs of subgroups of students such as those based on gender or ethnicity. Staff visit peer schools to learn of new practices that may be useful in their own school. As a result they have implemented conferencing in all subject areas to obtain qualitative data about students' progress. Teachers use this assessment practice to provide students with useful feedback that helps ensure progress towards their goals.

The school employs a data specialist to assist in the development of data gathering and has provided substantial training to assist teachers in utilizing data in the classroom. Leaders recognize that there are still areas that require attention, including systems for the collection of periodic data and better use of technology to analyze overall performance. Data for English language learners and special education students is used to ensure strong performance from both groups. The progress of English language learners is assessed through second language assessment tests and this data is used to provide appropriate support depending upon their English proficiency. The school uses a combination of effective teaching in special education classes and resource room interventions to provide good support to special education students. Teachers consistently use assessment data at classroom level in order to improve student achievement. Strategies also include effective differentiation and push-in academic intervention teachers.

**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 has established a collaborative environment where teachers meet to discuss and plan for improved student achievement. Content area teams meet weekly and their analysis of data forms the basis for decisions related to curriculum revisions and classroom practices. Teachers utilize student conferencing to help students set individual goals, thereby providing them with useful methods for monitoring their own progress. However the school has yet to develop a school-wide approach to goal setting that has easily measurable success criteria within given timeframes. The school vigorously addresses the achievement of students in greatest need as evidenced by the notable progress by these groups. A combination of well researched intervention programs and a push in model to reduce student teacher ratio has lead to improved achievement among students.

The school shares its goals with the school community and realizes much support from an eager and dedicated staff. High expectations are conveyed to students and staff as evidenced by the pride exhibited by parents, students, and staff in their school. The school has begun to publish a student newspaper as well as an online information system. This promotes regular communication with parents about the progress students are making and to obtain information and feedback from parents. Parents report that access to teachers is very good and that teachers are responsive to their needs.

**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 has made good progress in developing its instructional program through the implementation of successful differentiation practices. The core curriculum includes end of unit assessments that allow teachers to monitor student attainment of grade-appropriate standards. Acuity information is analyzed to supplement end of unit assessments, conferencing notes and other diagnostic tools to measure how well students are doing. Through the use of well developed units of study that integrate their impressive arts program, the school has created a seamless curricular approach that engages students and allows them to progress in an environment of mutual respect. Students report that “teachers make us feel wanted and help us whenever we need it”. The arts program now includes fashion design, set design, and visual arts to appeal to a larger population of students, including boys. The school has also implemented effective grouping to encourage peer tutoring to allow students to move ahead while teachers work with small groups that require special attention.

School leaders hold teachers accountable for the success of their students. The use of data to plan and provide differentiated instruction is very beneficial and it is evident in all classes. The school has made budgeting, scheduling, and staffing decisions strategically based on data to ensure that resources are available to address literacy concerns. This has involved the hiring of a librarian, the scheduling of common planning periods and the inclusion of additional staff in areas of need. There is a clear environment of mutual respect among staff and students as evidenced by a calm and collegial tone throughout the building. The school’s procedures to monitor attendance are very effective as evidenced by an increase from the previous year, despite a student population that travels long distances to get to school.

**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 and the administrative team use frequent classroom observations, with constructive and immediate feedback, to plan for improvements in instructional practice. School leaders also utilize learning walks, where parents and teachers observe instruction, on a regular basis. This information, combined with that obtained from observations, informs professional development decisions. Teachers report that they

are frequently scheduled to conduct focused intervisitation into colleague's classrooms to observe good practice. The strong emphasis on teacher development has resulted in improved instructional skills. New teachers are also well supported through mentoring and support from supervisors. The use of intervisitations to peer classrooms has also been a major tool for developing their practice. One teacher stated, "This year has been the most support I've received in my entire career". Teachers discuss and plan for improved teaching practices during content area meetings through the analysis of data and the sharing of professional literature. Outside support is regularly utilized to provide additional professional development in areas of need. Teachers report that they have had training in the administration of numerous diagnostic assessments, and in conferencing which was described by one teacher as "the best training I've ever received". This practice has been implemented in all subject areas and teachers report that it has become an effective tool for improving student achievement.

The school guidance services offer students strong support in the form of individual conferencing and focused advisories that support the schools excellent learning environment. Good links with a wide range of external partners are fully exploited to enhance the students' academic and personal development. These partnerships also provide extensive opportunities for students to further develop their artistic talents.

**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 school administers diagnostic assessments three times per year in literacy to measure student progress. Teachers also utilize periodic assessments in all content area subjects to monitor progress and inform instruction throughout the year. The school uses a "humanities" approach and has therefore developed units of study that include regular comprehension examinations as well as rubric-assessed writing assignments at regular intervals that combine social studies and literacy development. However this data is not systematically collected to allow to effective monitoring of school-wide progress.

Teachers collect data and can show their own monitoring practices in their respective classes through the recording of interim assessment grades; this practice has lead to more consistent differentiation practices. Conferencing has been implemented across all classes, where teachers set goals with individual students, which allows for effective student ownership of their learning. Teachers' use of periodic assessments to measure the effectiveness of their own instruction has led to good practices in all classrooms. During content area meetings teachers use the information generated by these assessments well, to modify plans to meet students' needs. They also analyze data, plan interventions, revise curriculum maps, and develop uniform assessments. School leaders also analyze the data generated by periodic assessments and have made strategic decisions regarding the inclusion of programs identified as effective in peer schools. The school plans to continue their work to further develop in the establishment of interim instructional goal setting, progress monitoring of students, and in the development of school wide improvement efforts.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Bronx Dance Academy</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<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 . . .	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		
<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 . . .	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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				X	

<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, 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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					X

<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 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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					X

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>