



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Burnside School Complex

Elementary School 396

**1930 Andrews Avenue
Bronx
NY 10453**

Principal: Lawrence Wright

Dates of review: February 7 - 8, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Jo Storrs

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Burnside School Complex is an elementary school with 265 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 4. The school population comprises 19% Black, 78% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 90.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 90% eligibility.

The school shares an older building, gymnasium and some hallways with a middle school. It has undertaken significant improvements to the floors, classrooms, hallways and common areas. The principal is in his third year at the school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's vision and commitment to every student is an inspiration to staff and students.
- Administration use data effectively and work collaboratively with teachers to improve instruction and achievement for each student.
- Leaders and faculty have built a clear understanding of every student that is enabling planning and instruction to meet their needs more effectively.
- The principal's consistently high expectations permeate the school and enhance students' learning and behavior.
- The hard-working and dedicated teachers and staff work in close harmony, trialing new methods and approaches to improve learning.
- Students enjoy and benefit from a broad and varied curriculum and out of school activities.
- Special education students and those in greatest need of improvement profit from an integrated curriculum and carefully aligned interventions.
- The principal manages the budget and scheduling imaginatively to motivate students and to raise achievement.
- Staff and students respect and trust one another and work in an attractive, calm and industrious learning environment upheld by firmly-held policies.
- Thorough monitoring procedures are improving the effectiveness of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop staff's expertise in using data and technology to set challenging goals that raise achievement in all subjects.
- Persist with strategies to help all teachers use differentiation and assessment to consistently inform instruction and accelerate learning for all students.
- Develop more opportunities for students to be involved with planning, tracking and evaluating their own learning.
- Continue to strengthen links with parents to exchange information regarding their children's goals, progress and learning needs.

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.

The principal's vision, high expectations and commitment to every student are key factors in the school's development. He uses data successfully to gain a clear understanding of every student and to ensure programs meet their needs. He recognizes the importance of continuing to provide training, such as the recent and on-going support, to help all staff use data to set challenging student goals in all subjects. Administration work successfully and collaboratively with teachers to improve instruction and achievement for each student. All students enjoy and benefit from a broad and varied curriculum, and interesting out of school activities. Those in greatest need of support or improvement profit from carefully aligned interventions. Staff and students respect and trust one another. The school functions smoothly and efficiently and provides a calm learning environment. This is a major achievement in the shared accommodation.

The principal's consistently high expectations permeate the school and enhance students' learning and behavior. Together, administration and faculty have created a sense of purpose and a culture that encourages students' academic and personal development. Staff work in close harmony trialing new approaches to improve learning and are receiving valuable support to use differentiation and assessment effectively, although there is still some way to go. Students are beginning to be more involved in planning and evaluating their own learning and this successful strategy is being spread across the school. Parents are valued and welcomed. They fully support the school's high expectations and would value more opportunities to be involved with their children's goals, progress and learning. The principal and staff know the students well, and devise programs focused on meeting their particular needs. This is effectively supporting those with learning difficulties and beginning to challenge the high achievers. Thorough monitoring procedures, linked to planning and goal-setting, and effective support for all teachers, enables administration and increasingly, teachers, to keep the students' achievements under constant review. These measures are ensuring the ever-improving effectiveness of the school. The recommendations of the last review were taken seriously. Attendance has improved significantly and planning binders are now used consistently by all staff. Parental involvement and differentiated instruction have also improved considerably, but remain areas for further development. The school's inquiry team is playing a key role in enabling staff to use data to identify and resolve students' problems in learning. It is proactive in improving the programs and achievements of the focus group of students.

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.

Under the principal's clear guidance and supervision, a wealth of useful data has been gathered to gain a clear picture of the performance of each student. External and internal test and assessment data are examined closely. They are complemented by relevant records, student portfolios and work samples to build an accurate picture of each student's achievements, progress, attendance and behavior. This detailed information, and the school's small size, enable leaders to compare its performance annually, showing that results have steadily improved, especially in math. Combined with information on students' individual education plans, it also provides a comprehensive and regularly updated knowledge of the performance and needs of special education students, particularly those in the autistic spectrum.

Administration's rigorous analysis of all school data is shared with coaches and teachers and kept consistently in readily accessible binders. Administration work closely with coaches and teachers to develop suitable programs and interventions for each student, based on this data. On enrolment, all pertinent records and parental information are examined together with September grade tests to ensure students join the most appropriate classes to meet their needs. For instance, autistic children join a "micro-inclusion" class with two teachers and suitable resources to help them make the best possible progress. Across the school, student progress is reviewed with coaches during weekly grade meetings and programs or interventions changed, if necessary. This process provides suitable, specific support for English language learners and enrichment activities for high achievers. Frequent meetings with the assistant principal, responsible for the younger grades, and weekly meetings with coaches keep the principal fully updated about the performance of students, classes and grades. Administration and many teachers are skilled in using data and recent technology but the school recognizes the need to continue to provide training and support for those who are less confident.

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 principal's demand for high standards and his commitment to improve the achievement of every student drives goal setting. Measurable, time-bonded school goals are drawn from all available student data and relevant information. Leaders establish, share and adjust these goals, and drive school improvements, following consultations with the school community. Administration and coaches work collaboratively with teachers to establish subject, grade, class and student goals. They plan work which effectively meets the students' needs. Some teachers set challenging and exciting goals and plan motivating instruction, but others are not consistently working at this high level. The inquiry team is addressing one school priority. Members are using data analysis successfully to devise closely matched instruction for the focus group of students making the least progress in English language arts. On-going tracking and test data show that the progress of all these students has improved and further refinements are now being devised. The outcomes will inform programs for other

students. The principal's vision and high expectations are evident in hallways and classrooms displaying students' work and achievements. Students are constantly encouraged to wear school uniform and perform at their best. Their achievements are recognized by various rewards such as "school dollars" which they can spend at the school store. Many methods of communication keep the whole community aware of the school's mission and goals. Staff handbooks, bulletins, letters and documentation, such as the recently developed school newspaper provide the information required for everyone to understand what the school stands for and expects. Currently, the school is also establishing a website for school, student and parental communication and is training staff in its use. Parents admire and respect the principal and find the school welcoming, considerate and supportive of both them and their children. The open-door policy encourages them to provide or receive information regarding their children's education. However, parents are not fully aware of children's goals, progress or how best to help them at home. Regular meetings, workshops and "Breakfasts with the Principal" offer additional occasions to strengthen links between school and home and to promote the school's goals.

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 mandated curriculum is supported by additional programs before and after school, and on Saturdays. The use of technology, including SMART boards, videos and computer software, such as "Accelerated Reader", to support independent reading at students' level, are all improving student engagement and resulting in a distinct improvement in the fluency of all students, especially English language learners. To motivate students and extend their horizons, the school provides a rich and varied curriculum, including the arts, physical education, American ballroom dancing and trips to museums and other places of interest to support class-based programs. Dedicated teachers and staff play a crucial role. They know they are accountable and feel trusted and respected as professionals. They work in close harmony with leaders and coaches. Some confidently try new methods, approaches and technologies to improve student learning; others are provided with helpful training and support. A few teachers are providing useful opportunities for students to be involved with planning, tracking and evaluating their own learning, although this is not consistent across all classes. Staff and students respect and trust one another and work in an attractive, industrious learning environment sustained by firmly held policies.

The principal focuses resources on student achievement which has led to creative and successful staffing and scheduling decisions. Careful class scheduling makes the best use of time and facilities and is helping to bring about improved differentiated instruction through small group work. It ensures excellent support for those students with specific learning needs, and is extending higher achievers in many classes. The school continues to work with teachers who are not using differentiation routinely during lessons to check students' understanding and challenge their thinking. The principal and staff have worked very hard to improve attendance. Parents are highly supportive of the principal's high expectations and, as students enjoy school and learning, attendance has risen considerably and this contributes significantly to the school's success.

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 school is fortunate to have a principal whose commitment and determination act as an inspiration to staff and students. Recent procedures and rewards, rigorously implemented, ensure students behave well and the school operates smoothly and efficiently in a calm atmosphere. Parents see this as a considerable strength given the school shares its building and some hallways with another school. Administration makes formal observations and follows up the visits with appropriate training if necessary. As part of the principal's strategy for improvement, leaders also undertake regular "learning walks" with coaches and different groups of class teachers. In a school of this size, this strategy keeps the principal constantly updated about the quality of instruction and students' progress, and enables teachers to observe and share good practice. All this information and other data inform administration's decisions about instruction and students' achievement. Professional development is carefully aligned to meet whole school and the significant range of individual teacher needs. For instance, eight teachers attended training at Harvard University and, by integrating technology into their instruction, students are highly motivated to learn. This training is being passed onto all staff. Equally, tutors from New York University and Hunter College provide exceptional support for staff working with autistic students which is impacting positively on programs for all special education students. This growing confidence of teachers and their friendly, professional manner have enabled intervisitations to feature as an effective means of evaluating and sharpening instruction to benefit the students.

The school has developed a range of beneficial links with outside academic and community agencies, which effectively support students' overall development. Substantial expert support from support staff, medical practitioners at the on-site clinic and "AUSSIE" consultants working closely with the faculty, is further enhancing students' academic and personal development. Staff know the students very well, so issues and concerns are soon spotted, and generally resolved swiftly to ensure students' progress is not impaired.

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 high personal expectations of himself, and his thorough monitoring procedures are improving the effectiveness of the school. His detailed knowledge of the students, gained through data analysis, scrutiny of their work and observation of their behavior and engagement is enabling effective adjustments to be made to programs and interventions so they continue to be appropriate and successful. The consistent use of assessment binders by all staff and the increasing use of the website to make planning and homework accessible are enabling all staff to be part of the monitoring regime. The support from administration and coaches ensures all teachers understand the link between goal setting and on-going monitoring and is raising student achievement. Valuable extra support is provided for the few teachers not routinely using on-going and

periodic assessment effectively to consistently inform instruction and accelerate learning for all students.

The loyal, dedicated teachers appreciate that classroom observations by administration and coaches constantly monitor their effectiveness and that student outcomes gauge the success of instruction. With support from leaders, they make very good use of the information they gain to gauge the impact of their work and revise plans and interventions accordingly. Within this positive and professional approach, leaders and faculty are forging ahead to the benefit of students. The principal's clearly articulated vision is fully supported by the whole school community. The effective monitoring procedures are successfully helping this vision to be achieved and the school to continue to improve.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Burnside School Complex	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