

Quality Review Report

2008-2009

Patrolman Robert Bolden School

Elementary School 345

**111 Berriman Street
Brooklyn
NY 11208**

Principal: Wanda Holt

Dates of review: February 2 – 3, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Martin Weinstein

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Patrolman Robert Bolden School is an elementary school with 732 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 49% Black, 46% Hispanic, 1% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 90.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 99% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

In last year's Quality Review the school had shortcomings in the area of measurable and time-related goals for teachers. Since that review, the school has created and incorporated a system known as "Monitoring for Success," which ensures rigorous and appropriate short and long term goal setting for staff across core subjects. This system requires staff members to scrutinize student data, conference with and submit monthly action plans to school leaders. An outgrowth of this initiative has been refinements in professional development as well as improvements in goal setting and differentiated instruction for all students. The school's embracing of Core Knowledge instructional practice and unified curriculum mapping ensures all students' intellectual and emotional needs are met and they are continuously challenged to do their best. The Arts are deeply embedded within instructional practices in all subject areas on all grade areas to promote sustained student interest. Most notably, student created relief maps of ancient civilizations and figurines of individuals of historical prominence are conspicuously displayed, music, drama and a myriad of art forms ebb and flow continuously in all core subjects. One student stated, "When I don't get something right away, the teachers have a way to make sense of things for me...this might be the playing of a song to get me on track." New, interactive computer-based programs abound within the school to support student interest and to diagnose reading deficits across the school such as "Ticket to Read" and "Achieve IT." The offering of enrichment classes for students in kindergarten through grades 5 this year has bolstered the support for higher-achieving students.

The school's core inquiry team has been a catalyst in the engagement for the whole school in the inquiry process. Inquiry teams are now in place on all grade levels and now the school is in a better position to more precisely plan long-term and interim goals for students. With data more firmly in place, the school's pedagogical practice closely matches the students' diverse learning requirements, which was also an area identified for improvement last year. "Round Table" discussions have been introduced for parents and caregivers of inquiry team students with inquiry team staff members. Additionally, Acuity and Scantron assessment workshops are being offered more frequently for all parents and caregivers in the school to broaden their understanding of their children's progress and aide them in the support of their growth. However, school leaders recognize the need for these workshops to engage with Spanish speakers to more fully support the school community. The school leadership is also acutely aware of need to make improvements in the area of student discipline and communication with the school community and they are actively working towards putting better systems in place.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school infuses challenge and interest in a good quality interdisciplinary and thematic curriculum for students of all ability levels.
- The school collects and analyzes a wide range of assessment and other data and staff make good use of this to develop goals for students and teachers, and to adjust professional development and instruction.
- Systems for student, classroom, grade level and subject area goal setting are in place, carefully monitored and revised appropriately.
- The school has expanded the inquiry team process across all grade levels very well.
- Interactive computer-based programs have been incorporated to support student interest and to diagnose reading deficits across the school.
- Enrichment classes have been created to meet the needs of higher achieving students from kindergarten through grades 5.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop strategies to enhance a culture of mutual support and respect among all individuals in the school-wide community.
- Ensure differentiated instructional material is available and appropriate for English language learners and special education students.
- Expand learning opportunities so that parents and caregivers, including Spanish speakers, can support their children in achieving their goals more effectively.
- Establish systems and procedures within the building to promote greater safety in large group meeting areas within the school.

Part 3: Main Findings

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has an effective system to collect and analyze data from a wide range of sources. Most notably, ARIS, Acuity, Scantron, Ed Performance, ECLAS, DRA, SRI, Fountas and Pinnell, Rigby-Open Court and Foundations are among the school's data treasure trove. Benchmark assessments identify student needs early in the school year. The data from State summative assessments and in-house formative assessments in English language arts and math, augmented by Acuity and Scantron and other periodic sources, serve as the blueprint for all instructional decisions and student goal formation. Student portfolios and work folders on all grade levels and in many core subjects provide additional data and further support improved student achievement. Authentic teacher comments which are aligned with student goals provide good next steps to help students improve their work. School leaders and staff demonstrate an in-depth analysis of data across classes, grades and core subjects. The school disaggregates data by gender, ethnicity, English language learner and special education status. Their desegregation of this data has led to a good understanding of the performance and progress of all subgroups. This in turn has enabled school leaders and staff to develop suitable goals and infuse appropriate instructional methodologies for these students.

There are good systems in place for addressing the needs of special education students and English language learners. Teachers track progress against all areas of the individual education plan for special education students and State assessment findings for English language learners. This year's incorporation of the interactive, computer-based programs "Ticket to Read" and "Achieve IT" has demonstrated good support of these subgroups' level of interest and has provided them as well as their teachers with immediate feedback regarding their reading deficiencies and growth. This year, the school has introduced an enrichment class for higher achieving students on each grade level. These classes provide students with challenging enrichment opportunities using a project-based approach. The school scrutinizes ethnic group and gender information and utilizes all subgroup information in providing differentiated instruction and interventions to address the needs of all students. The overall attendance has been for this school year has been remained consistent with last year's figure of nearly 91% and school leaders are increasing incentive award programs to improve attendance further.

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.

Since last year’s Quality Review, the school has built upon the effective systems for tracking students’ progress which combine teachers’ formative assessments and records, summative scores and computer generated predictive and diagnostic assessments. Now, on a weekly basis, students are required to complete an academic and personal goal grid know as “What is your target?” for all core subjects. This ongoing system of student goal setting, known as “Monitoring for Success”, is an integral component of the school’s broader goal setting system. It requires teachers to submit to the principal and assistant principal on a monthly basis the charting of the students at risk and the intervention services provided. They also submit a “Class At A Glance” grid for all students, highlighting a myriad of school-based assessments such as running records, Fountas and Pinnell and SRI reading levels, math inventories as well as predictive test results. Lending purposefulness and efficacy to this system, the principal and assistant principal provide timely feedback to teachers regarding their “Monitoring for Success” documentation. Additionally, teachers and school leaders have had an initial one-on-one goal setting conference in the early fall and plans have been made for mid-year and end of the year conferences.

Students in early grade levels through grade 5 know their long-term and interim goals and speak intelligently about their strengths and weaknesses in the majority of core subject areas. Their individual portfolios and work folders are replete with index cards and checklists detailing their goal actualization and this enhances their familiarity with learning and behavioral expectations. Additionally, teachers review the students’ progress during conferences with them during class, preparation and lunch periods. The teachers’ comments on student work reflect academic rigor and the establishment of goal expectations. As one parent said, “My child was going to another school and falling through the cracks...now that she is here, she knows what is expected of her because everyone takes time out for her and she has become a successful student.” Notwithstanding, as indicated by the school’s Learning Environment Survey, there is a need to engage a wider range of parents in the academic goal setting cycle for their children.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

Teachers’ good understanding of the Core Knowledge Program means that students follow a broad and rigorous curriculum. Across grades, students engage well with multi-sensory and dynamic learning challenges. For example, students in the kindergarten participate in math lessons based on “read alouds” steeped in poetry, and third graders using the “Read 180” program compose persuasive essays relating to a variety of controversial topics. Trips are tailored to students’ interests and needs and are an integral component of the curriculum. The outgrowth of these experiences within and outside the classroom invariably leads to discussions containing rich accountable talk.

Teachers collaborate with school leaders during individual and grade conferences in shaping differentiated learning activities. In addition, all grades have received one additional preparation per week. The fruits of these labors are clearly borne out during classroom observations where differentiation is observed in many classrooms. In these classes, students are in pairs or groups according to achievement level or learning style. Appropriate instructional material English language learners and special education students are in demand and the school's administration are working towards filling this void.

School leaders have demonstrated a keen awareness of the concerns expressed by both parents and teachers on this past year's Learning Environment Survey relating to trust and respect. Acting upon these concerns, communication has been increased from the office of the principal through a monthly newsletter to parents and guardians as well as an email distribution of ongoing information to staff. Parents and guardians also receive monthly letters and progress reports from teachers. However, the effectiveness of these recent initiatives has yet to be determined. Additionally, due to the seriousness of the concerns voiced by these parties, additional mechanisms to perpetuate a more positive school climate should be in place. Student behavior in large group meeting areas such as the school's cafeteria and auditorium have represented a safety concern and these are being addressed through procedural modifications and the reorganization of staff deployment.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

School leaders monitor, record and chart teacher progress in their performance through the "Monitoring for Success" system as well as through classroom visits and one-on-one conferencing where student work and assessments are carefully evaluated. Professional development for new and seasoned staff is the key mechanism for the sharing of best teaching practice as well as for the amelioration of instructional areas of weakness. Literacy and math coaches, in-house mentors, lead teachers, as well as the administration, provide ongoing support through collaborative lesson planning, student data interpretation and goal setting, instructional modeling and intervisitations. As one teacher shared, "As a new teacher, I have had the opportunity to visit teachers on my grade level and on the grades below and above my grade. This gave me the opportunity to understand the skills needed to enter my class and the requisite skills I had to equip my students with to move forward." Additionally, teachers have received push-in school training in differentiated instruction from Renzulli Consultants and extensive after-school training pertaining to a wide range of core subject areas through the Knowledge Network.

This year school's core inquiry team has targeted students in grades 3 through 5 who scored in the lowest third on State assessments in English language arts and math. As one inquiry team member stated, "We have now raised the bar and each of us has adopted six to seven additional students on all grade levels, this is in addition to the fifteen students we study as a team. Parents of inquiry team students are extended the opportunity to meet with us during 'Round Table Discussions'. Moreover, the best practices of this team have been replicated on all grades where you can find a grade-specific inquiry team."

The inquiry process is embedded throughout the building, where ongoing workshops in Acuity and Scantron for staff, parents and caregivers are offered during the course of the school day. However, the school's growing community of Spanish-speaking adults are not able to access these workshops effectively as they are currently only held in English. School leaders and staff work in partnership with their community-based organization City-Year to ensure those students and their families receive critical support services. The school has provided students with opportunities to build character and promote greater academic interest through participation in Children for Children, Donors to Choose and Penny Harvest.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 implementation of "Monitoring for Success" has infused a coherent and rigorous system to improve the teachers' reflective interpretation of student data, refinement of pedagogical practice to effectuate gains in student achievement. According to one teacher, "The system of 'Monitoring for Success' has breathed a new life into this building, not only are we continuing to look at student data and progress, we are evaluating our own craft and by being our harshest critics, I believe we are servicing our kids a great deal better."

With the increase of common planning preparation periods from one to two per week for each grade, administrators and teachers now use data more routinely and this places the school in a better position to improve instruction and modify plans promptly in order to maximize student learning. The seeds of the inquiry process planted by last year's core team have now germinated and continue to flourish as a true tree of learning throughout the school. The school community has been imbued with a renewed sense of purpose to achieve greater success in student achievement through the expansion of inquiry teams on all grades. The "adoption" of additional inquiry team students by core team members has reinforced these purposeful activities. The school's partnership with parents and guardians in "Round Table Discussions" and predictive training for them, has fully unified the effectiveness of the inquiry progress.

Although, the school's leadership sustained a small, somewhat negative "fallout" on this past year's Learning Environment Survey, they have been able to respond quickly and they are demonstrating the caring and resourcefulness needed to improve the lives of all students, staff and parents. In the words of one parent, "The principal is very focused and tough when she has to be and, in a nutshell, she treats our children like they are her own and many of us would have it no other way."

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Patrolman Robert Bolden School	Δ	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?				X
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			X	
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			X	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			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 student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?			X	
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			X	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			X	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYO, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?				X
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?			X	
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X	
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.

<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?			X	
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?				X
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?			X	
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X	

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

<i>To what extent do...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?			X	
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?			X	
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X	
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X	

Quality Review Scoring Key

△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed
---	-----------------------	---	--	---	-------------------	---	-----------------------