

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

**Bayside Enrichment & Long Distance Learning
Academy**

Middle School 294

**18-25 212th Street
Queens
NY 11360**

Principal: Cheryl Quatrano-Hatzidimitriou

Dates of review: March 17 - 18, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Petrina Palazzo

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Bayside Enrichment & Long Distance Learning Academy, commonly referred to as BELL Academy, is a middle school with 301 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 4% Black, 21% Hispanic, 35% White, and 37% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007-2008 was 96.3%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

From the daily morning announcements made by students to the After School All-Stars program, BELL Academy is a middle school completely focused on ensuring the academic and personal success of every one of its students. Exemplary, engaging and attractive student work lines the hallway and classroom walls and reflects the successes of a wide-range of learners. Displays of photographs and honors celebrate the accomplishments of students, who are highly fortunate to be a part of the supportive, “family-like” school community. As shared by a parent, “At BELL, teachers are not just teachers, they have big hearts and care for our children.”

An outstanding feature of BELL Academy is its partnership with Renzulli Learning, which provides tools to identify each student’s talents, learning styles, and interests. These data-rich profiles are accessible to teachers, parents and students and supplement the school’s highly effective systems for collecting and analyzing multiple forms of formative and summative assessment data. This informs school-wide decision-making and enables the school to build on each student’s strengths to promote the motivation and engagement required to impact areas in need of improvement. Parents, staff and students credit the strong focus on data, project-based learning approach, community partnerships and enrichment clusters with enhancing the rigorous curriculum and providing the foundations for differentiation. The school is currently building on existing good practice for differentiation to ensure consistency in all classrooms. All students have individual learning goals in all core subjects, and the school is working to refine them to ensure they are even more targeted to support increased student outcomes.

The principal shares leadership with staff, families and students and is well respected. Quarterly parent, student and teacher evaluations exemplify the reciprocal communication systems that engender a sense of ownership and promote authentic collaboration across the school community. Parents are very satisfied with the communication, professionalism and dedication of all staff members, and the school is extending communication systems to families and students that will enable them to provide feedback and input on individual student learning goals in all core subjects. Frequent and purposeful teacher collaboration and professional learning opportunities encourage and support continued teacher self-reflection and development. As stated by a teacher, “You can grow as a teacher at BELL. [They give] much more support than any other school.” A student captured the essence of the culture in the statement, “BELL Academy is the best school ever...’BELL-ieve in yourself’ [the school’s motto] summarizes what we do.”

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has excellent systems to generate, gather, and analyze a wide variety of data to gain a clear view of individual students, groups of students and the whole school.
- The school's outstanding collaborative structures and use of data-informed planning ensure shared development of the Comprehensive Educational Plan.
- A strong enrichment cluster program promotes high levels of academic engagement by enabling students to utilize their talents and interests in order to improve learning.
- Extensive partnerships with community-based organizations accelerate student outcomes by providing real-world personal connections and additional opportunities to apply academic content.
- Highly effective systems promote excellent staff collaboration and professional learning that is improving student outcomes.
- Parents value the professionalism and dedication of staff members and the project-based learning approach that is raising the academic and personal growth of students and encourages parental involvement.
- School leaders and faculty evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions within and across grades and core subjects to improve teacher instructional practices.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance goal setting in all core subjects to ensure teachers create more refined individual student learning goals that strategically support increased student outcomes.
- Extend the excellent communication systems to families and students eliciting input and feedback on individual student learning goals in all core subjects.
- Build upon existing good practice to provide instruction that is differentiated consistently in all core subjects.

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 well developed.

The school has exceptional systems in place to collect and utilize a wide variety of formative and summative data in all core subjects. In addition, the school collects talent, learning style and interest data provided through Renzulli Learning on-line student profiles. School leaders and faculty frequently and strategically analyze this data to create a comprehensive picture of the school, each grade level, all subgroups, and the individual student. School leaders periodically develop elaborate charts and graphs to help identify trends, monitor progress and engage in discussions that inform school-wide decision-making.

Teachers in all core subjects maintain assessment notebooks, which contain data and goals for each class, subgroup and student. Teachers use this data to inform grouping for differentiated instruction and to monitor and discuss with students and families progress over time. Parents are very satisfied with the communications they receive regarding their children's learning outcomes and progress in all core subject areas. They receive a formal communication every four to six weeks via an academic progress report and have frequent informal communications with teachers through student planner books, email, phone and personal discussions.

The school excels in gathering and analyzing student work in all core subjects. Individual student's standards-based portfolios contain a collection of exemplary student work and serve as benchmarks for achievement and next steps. These portfolios follow students in each core subject during their three years at the school. Students also maintain skills-based portfolios containing completed and on-going classwork that inform individual strengths, needs and differentiation. During frequent one-to-one conferences, teachers and students discuss both portfolios and all forms of data to determine progress, set goals and identify next steps for student learning. This consistent communication has a positive impact on student performance and progress by presenting a path to improvement.

The school shares all forms of data, which summarize the whole child, to ensure that relevant staff members know each student's academic and personal strengths and areas of need. When there are concerns about a student's performance or progress, school leaders and faculty gather their collective knowledge of the student during "Kid Talk" sessions to identify specific needs and target interventions. As a result, students, families, school leaders and faculty each have a clear understanding of student learning, progress, and next steps.

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.

School leaders share the results of rigorous school-wide data analyses with staff, parents, the school leadership team and students. These data analyses inform next steps for student learning. Based on these outcomes, they create and share Comprehensive Educational Plan and Principal Performance Review goals with the school community, including parents, to elicit their views and make revisions. The resulting school-wide goals are measurable, actionable, reflect clear and high expectations, and are understood and endorsed by everyone. During school leadership team meetings, faculty conferences and team planning meetings, data is periodically analyzed to measure progress towards meeting these goals and affecting student performance.

Teachers strategically analyze a wide-range of formative and summative data to identify needs of individual students and groups of students. Each student has a personalized learning plan in all core subjects that includes goals based on all relevant data. This accelerates student performance by enabling them to focus on improving areas of need. The school is now building on existing good practice to ensure that individual student’s learning goals are further refined to strategically affect increased student outcomes across all core subjects.

The language arts department is at the forefront of communicating goals with students and families. These faculty members consistently confer one-to-one with students to share actionable, measurable goals. To ensure consistent communication, students, parents, and teachers sign off on the goals. The school is working to extend the excellent family and student communication systems by asking that they provide input and feedback that will inform the revision of individual student learning goals in all core subjects.

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 well developed.

The school has rigorous, engaging curricula in all core subjects, including the arts, that are standards-based and incorporate group work and project-based learning approaches. On a regular basis, students make presentations in all core subjects to demonstrate learning and explain their problem solving strategies and procedures. Strong interdisciplinary connections enable students to apply skills, knowledge, and learning across subject areas. This accelerates student learning by ensuring that they have multiple opportunities to practice, use and internalize content. The focus on project-based learning in all core subjects supports students in creating individualized products that utilize their talents and interests to demonstrate learning. A pillow diary depicting life in the 1920s and a comic strip summarizing a chapter in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* illustrate this. Consequently, students make good progress because these opportunities enable them to comprehend content in ways that are meaningful to them. In response to student interest surveys, the school funds technology, Spanish and art classes, which complement the curricula and motivate students’ learning. In addition,

there is a wide-range of weekly enrichment cluster experiences, such as guitar and fashion design. These provide more opportunities for students to exercise their talents and interests while making connections to subject content and community outreach. As stated by a teacher, “The Friday cluster programs bring teacher and student talents together to impact student learning.”

Many teachers plan differentiated lessons that are meeting the needs of each learner based on data analyses. A student shared that, “Teachers give you the learning skills you need.” The school is currently building upon these existing good practices for differentiation to ensure consistency across all classrooms. The school provides excellent academic intervention and tutoring to individual students and groups of students with additional needs. The BELL Scholars after-school program offers extra enrichment opportunities that suitably challenge the highest achieving students.

The school fosters a very positive culture and a high level of trust and respect that is evident throughout the school community. Students work extremely well in groups to support each other’s academic and personal growth despite their great diversity. Teachers collaborate on a daily basis to discuss student needs, plan interdisciplinary lessons, and ensure one another’s continued development and success.

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 well developed.

Highly effective systems are in place to enable optimal staff collaboration and professional development opportunities that are improving student outcomes and meeting the individual needs of teachers. Teachers collaborate formally during weekly team planning and whole school professional learning sessions as well as during monthly department meetings and faculty conferences. In addition, teachers complete quarterly reflective self-evaluations that enable adjustments to coaching based on individual needs. Data from evaluations also informs content for school-wide and small group professional learning. Teachers request professional development based on needs identified in student data. For example, based on teachers’ requests, they receive professional development for working with student groups, such as English language learners and Levels 3 and 4 students who are not making one year’s progress. Additionally, teachers request inter-visitations to observe best practices or receive constructive feedback from colleagues to improve instruction and student outcomes. School leaders regularly conduct observations and pre-and post-observation meetings to monitor progress and determine individual needs and next steps. On a daily basis, school leaders and faculty collaborate informally to discuss, monitor and improve data, planning, teaching and student learning. The Inquiry Team frequently shares its findings during formal professional development, and all teachers implement successful strategies to improve learning for every student.

The school successfully supports academic growth by connecting to each student’s real-world personal interests and needs in myriad ways. Extensive partnerships with community-based organizations, student government program and enrichment clusters help develop student leadership skills through incorporating community outreach and service to the school’s partners. This enables students to understand how they can make a difference in their community. All students participate in a weekly youth development assembly that addresses relevant academic, social and emotional issues that affect the adolescent learner. Many students request training to be peer mediators, which provides them with the responsibility of finding ways to resolve conflicts creatively and positively.

All these programs accelerate student learning by aiding students' personal growth and development of leadership skills.

School leaders and faculty plan engaging extracurricular activities for parents and students that promote the positive school culture and academic and personal growth of students. Parents value the professionalism and dedication of staff members, which positively influence parental involvement. The staff is very cohesive and seamlessly integrates external support services that promote the continued development of the whole child.

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 well developed.

The school has excellent systems in place to analyze all summative and formative data, including the Quality Review, Progress Report, Learning Environment Survey, interim assessments, and other on-going information. Based on these outcomes and all other relevant data, the school evaluates and modifies organizational decisions that affect teachers' instructional practices and student learning. Input and feedback provided through quarterly evaluations from parents, teachers and students supplement quantitative data analyses.

The many weekly opportunities for professional learning and collaboration encourage teachers to continually reflect upon and improve their practice in order to raise student performance and progress. During weekly team planning meetings, teachers regularly review student work and data to monitor progress, evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and determine implications for intervention and enrichment. Based on analyses, teachers revise curricula and modify instruction, such as incorporating the use of 'accountable talk' strategies and technology across all classrooms. Teacher-generated periodic diagnostic assessments and pre- and post-unit assessments inform curriculum compacting for each student and help determine whole class implications for teacher planning and instruction.

School leaders, faculty, parents and students share a strong understanding and ownership of the school's vision and mission. They clearly and consistently articulate the school community's foci, strengths and next steps. There is a very powerful sense of family and belonging across the whole school, which is particularly important to adolescent learners and their families. This ensures student motivation, parental involvement and accelerated student learning. A culture of learning permeates the school and is evident from the school leaders, faculty, and students to the parents and partners. A student summarized this in the statement, "BELL Academy is a school where we learn not only for today, but also for tomorrow."

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: BELL Academy (Q294)	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