

# **Quality Review**

# **Report**

## **2008-2009**

**The Bilingual School**

**Elementary School 25**  
**811 East 149th Street**  
**Bronx**  
**NY 10455**

**Principal: Carmen Toledo**

**Dates of review: April 29 – 30, 2009**

**Reviewer: Yolanda Torres**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Bilingual School is an elementary school with 350 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 11% Black, 87% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 41% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 91%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 93% eligibility.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

The principal, in her first year in the school, has set a clear vision of high expectations for all students. Her focus on student achievement and professional development is evident through the variety of learning opportunities afforded to staff, students, and parents. Her “believe and achieve” mantra has energized staff and students in understanding the importance of teaching and learning. The school uses a wide variety of data to assess students’ academic needs and inform the teaching practice. Data is displayed throughout the building to inform the community of the successes, areas for improvement and a sense of urgency when it comes to student achievement.

The school demonstrates an excellent beginning to the goal-setting process. Goals are content-specific and students understand the expectations by subject. However, there is a lack of evidence of student-specific learning goals to address their individual academic needs. While there are pockets of differentiated instruction flourishing through the building, evidence of this is inconsistent across all core subjects.

Teachers are involved in professional development training sessions that support their learning. Data analysis has helped teachers realize its impact on instruction and their own learning. There is a positive energy amongst teachers towards professional learning and a structured environment where staff, students, and parents can work together.

Students like their teachers and feel comfortable learning with them. They are proud of the work they have completed thus far. While students can articulate the subject-specific learning goals, there is inconsistent knowledge amongst students in regards to their individual learning goals.

The school is a secure learning environment where staff, students, and parents collaborate and maintain an open communication. Parents feel welcomed. They see opportunities to learn how to help their children through the support structures and programs in the school.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is a strategic, well-respected thinker and planner who has met individually with staff and shared her vision for the improvement of student achievement and the development of a learning community.
- Teachers and school leaders use a variety of data to understand student progress and performance to plan interventions that meet students' needs.
- The school consistently communicates high expectations to all staff students and parents through school-wide public displays goals, attendance data, progress reports, and assessment achievements.
- The school is a structured, safe learning environment where staff, students, and parents see a high level of engagement, respect, and caring with the opportunity to grow as an individual.
- Teachers collaborate frequently to examine student work, plan together, and visit each other's classrooms to share ideas and best practices with a desire to continually improve student outcomes and grow professionally.
- The school has engaged teachers in professional development opportunities allowing them to set their professional goals and share their experiences within the learning community.

### Areas for Improvement

- Develop a cohesive structure for the monitoring of students' achievement of their differentiated learning goals in all core subjects.
- Build on the excellent start to school-wide goal setting by supporting all core teachers in the development of student differentiated learning goals.
- Promote greater consistency in the differentiation of instruction that challenges all students at all achievement levels and subgroups.
- Sharpen strategic school planning by identifying specific interim measures of progress to monitor growth and evaluate the need for adjustment to accelerate students' academic improvement.

## 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 uses a wide variety of data to assess students' needs. Following the start of school year item analysis, school leaders in collaboration with teachers decided on a uniform assessment process for monitoring student progress. Teachers meet with school leaders to analyze and discuss data to understand the needs of students' and how best to address them. The school has developed a spread-at-a-glance that it shares with all teachers, which gives information on students' assessment results. Running records, simulated exams, conferral notes, and student writing pieces are some of the assessments used to determine subgroup-specific goals. Each classroom has targeted students for instructional focus. Teachers use the data results and daily attendance reports to target students' needs and plan accordingly.

In order to increase the communication between the school and home, the school sends home a school-developed monthly progress report on content-specific goals, students' individual attendance, and academic expectations. This has set a sense of urgency and educational focus amongst students. Consequently, parents are aware of their children's progress in school. They attend monthly assemblies where the school acknowledges and celebrates students' attendance accomplishments. Students understand the importance of daily attendance and academic improvement. They look forward to seeing graphs and comparing averages. This school-wide strategy challenges students to analyze attendance results and have conversations with their peers on their progress. There is a clear sense of academic expectations and a unified language on student achievement is beginning to evolve. Nonetheless, there is inconsistent evidence of a systematic structure to track student academic progress over time.

The "First Friday-Second Cup of Coffee" with the principal is a 'historical' event amongst parents. They enjoy having time with the principal and get the opportunity to visit classrooms and read to students learning strategies they can practice at home with their children. Parents appreciate the school's effort in maintaining open communication. They acknowledge the opportunities to learn through training, workshops, and conferences. They appreciate the fact that the school takes time to educate them so they learn how they can begin to support their child at home.

**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 leadership team is an active group that meets on a monthly basis and collaboratively works on the Comprehensive Educational Plan. The translation of essential components of this document gives parents an understanding of the school’s focus on academics and parent involvement. The principal presented her goals, based on her individual meetings with teachers, classroom assessments, and prior year test results, to the team. School leaders set individual goals with teachers. Classroom data analysis leads to discussions on student grouping and targeted instruction. Once teachers are clear about students’ areas of strengths and those in need of improvement, teachers initiate conversations with students to develop learning goals. While there is evidence that students understand subject-specific learning goals, they are unable to articulate their individual learning goals consistently.

During common planning time, teachers share their data to identify trends and decide on the benchmarks for every assessment. In addition, they discuss and complete the language acquisition assessment to support teacher practice in providing English language learners with the adequate English as a second language structures for vocabulary development. Nonetheless, there is no a common thread of understanding amongst all teachers regarding the impact of these trends and how to accelerate student learning.

The achievement of learning goals has been a focal point in the school. Hallway displays of content-based standards and goals and monthly comparative graphs reflect the commitment from the administration and teachers to inform the school community of school-wide expectations. Subject-specific goals discussions take place in teacher planning meetings and in classrooms. Student differentiated learning goals are not consistently visible. The ‘granular’ analysis of student progress amongst all core subject teachers to support the development of measurable, actionable learning goals for student achievement is not consistently evident.

Teachers and guidance counselor articulate and discuss interventions to address the individual needs of at-risk students. The school delivers a strong message about looking at the whole child and deciding on next steps for further support. In addition, teachers make sure to schedule meetings with parents to discuss these goals.

Assessment binders reflect the school-wide goals and, to some extent, documentation to support the tracking of student progress. The school has instituted school-wide benchmarks in reading and writing. School leaders meet with teachers to discuss the outcomes of these assessments to decide on next steps in their planning and delivery of instruction. Teachers welcome this interaction and collaboration with administration to help them use data to inform instruction.

**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 meet and plan during the common meeting time to discuss possible groupings of students. After student groups are organized, additional staff members join the classroom teachers to work with the small groups. Specialist teachers also hone in on the needed skills for students' academic improvement. Other intervention providers conduct additional formative assessments as they work with students in small groups. The school leaders have scheduled the additional staff members during school-wide uninterrupted times to focus on students' needs.

Staff see the principal's motto as an attainable goal and that the resources and units of study developed this year have helped to refocus their planning. According to teachers, the data drives the instruction while collaboration has led to teacher-to-teacher communication. There is a larger scope on data in preparing plans and instructional interventions. In regards to the development of differentiated lessons, there is inconsistent evidence that the delivery of such lessons meet the individual needs of students.

According to school leaders, reflection leads to improvement and achievement. As teachers reflect on their own practice, students are learning to reflect as well. According to one student, the newly adopted weekly reflection sheet, "refreshes our minds on what we learned during the week". It also helps set their focus on a specific concept for the following week. Students in bilingual classes reflect their learning using the richness of the Spanish vernacular modeled by their teachers. In addition, English language learners demonstrate their language capabilities by implementing learned English as second language strategies in classes and sharing their learning.

The new administration has developed an effective learning environment with systems and structures for staff and students. There is a clear sense amongst staff of accountability and commitment to student achievement. Students also understand their responsibility towards their own learning. Teachers are beginning to take ownership by proposing ideas to the administration on diversity of programs to support student learning. The school is extremely proud of the development of the "listening radio show", which it created to enhance students' speech and language ability. Newsletters created by staff, teams and students are giving them a voice and it is evident that staff a community of learners and leaders is beginning to evolve.

**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.**

Administrators conduct walkthroughs on a frequent basis and give teachers immediate feedback that helps them to reflect on their practice. They take part in further conversations and model specific practices. Teachers welcome this and the professional development tied to the expectations. Planning sessions are opportunities to discuss trends and grade-specific next steps and lead to intervisitation to learn from each other. Teachers are part of the decision-making process in the selection of

programs that support their planning. They acknowledge that their learning community is evolving towards collaboration and support. School leaders strongly believe that teachers need to be at the core of these decisions. Staff appreciate the clear direction. They grow professionally because of opportunities to make decisions about lesson planning resources and professional development opportunities. Although the school has a high percentage of experienced teachers, they acknowledge the need for ongoing professional development and detailed plans for individual teachers. There is openness to new ideas and strategies for improvement of instructional practice. Professional development training sessions have been key motivational resources and the monthly faculty conferences support teacher practice and give them a forum to share their learning from the training sessions.

The inquiry team meets on a weekly basis and all teachers are welcome to attend. After the analysis of data, they selected the struggling population of students in a specific grade and focused on vocabulary development. The classroom teacher takes part in discussions about particular students and the team looks at samples of student work. It informs the community of the progress made through the newsletter "Inquisitive Voices." The team has shared successful strategic models with the school community for school-wide implementation. Colleagues have commented on the usefulness of these models and their positive impact on their teaching and student learning.

As school leaders visit classrooms, they seize 'teachable moments' to model best practices or simply co-teach with classroom teachers and encourage visitations to other schools. The framework for teacher learning is a key component in the professional development focus of the school. Teachers are eager to learn and want to continue the trend through book clubs and other project-based activities.

The school has successful partnerships with community-based organizations that help students with homework and provide additional activities that contribute to the needed skills in literacy and math for their academic improvement. The school receives data results from the after school and weekend partnering program to help align their efforts in students' academic progress. Other extracurricular activities such as tutoring, music, and technology support student learning well. In addition, parents have the opportunity to participate in English as a second language adult class for their language acquisition. Mental health providers also support the school twice a week, including weekends, by educating the community on health issues and preventative measures.

**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 content-specific units-of study include standards with end-of-unit assessment plans. According to school leaders, they have tailored these units to the needs of students. While there is some attempt towards differentiation of instruction, there is inconsistent evidence in classrooms that demonstrates that lessons fully address the individual academic needs of students. Because the differentiation of instruction is not yet fully developed, it makes the monitoring and revision of student academic progression more difficult. The school appropriately intends to continue accelerating student learning at different levels, through ongoing teacher conversations on the importance of specific, differentiated learning goals to challenge them to reflect on their practice and instill in students the importance of self-monitoring and self-assessment.

The principal has set high expectations through the various meetings with teachers and parents. The school community considers her a strong leader with many new ideas for the school. They respect her for her focus and commitment to the school. Her vision and mission for the school is evident within the goals that teachers have set for themselves and for their students. It is evident that staff professional growth and student academic and social emotional development are at the core of the administration belief. Parents appreciate the school's focus on building a community of learners. They see the value of the work that is in place. Students are extremely happy to be part of a school community that is caring and instructionally focused. They welcome the learning because "the more they learn, the more they change, the more they grow".

# School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: The Bilingual School</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?		<b>X</b>		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<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?		<b>X</b>		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

## 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, DYQ, 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.

<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>