

# Quality Review Report 2009-2010

**The Bensonhurst School**

**Elementary School 128**

**2075 84 Street**

**Brooklyn**

**NY 11214**

**Principal: Marcia Robins**

**Dates of review: February 8 - 9, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Isabel DiMola**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Bensonhurst School is an elementary school with 371 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 20% Hispanic, 46% White and 32% Asian students. The student body includes 25% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 59% of the students enrolled and girls account for 41%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 95.3%.

### Overall Evaluation

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

School leaders are effective in using community resources to support and enrich the academic program for students in this culturally diverse school. They provide families with good social-emotional support, as evidenced by their relationship with Brooklyn Center for the Arts and the Advantage Program. Continual communication with parents articulates school and student goals and provides parents with good information to support students in reach learning targets. However, parent involvement does not influence school-wide planning and goal setting as parent leaders are new and do not yet participate in creating school-wide plans.

School leaders and faculty continually collect and analyze a wide range of data to understand trends in performance on a school-wide and classroom level. A multitude of assessments across class and grade levels provides a clear picture of student progress throughout the year. However, school leaders are just beginning to monitor the alignment and consistency of assessments to ensure accuracy and their impact on student progress. Strategic organizational decisions effectively support the needs of students. The curriculum is standards-based and aligned in content to school goals. School leaders regularly monitor the curriculum and instructional decisions and revise them when necessary. However, curriculum maps are a work in progress and the depth of rigor is inconsistent across subject areas. This inconsistency results in disparate levels of content and skills development across subject areas. School, class, and student goals are data driven and regularly revised to reflect student progress. Classroom instruction aligns to the school-wide vision and reflects the needs of students to expand literacy skills. This is demonstrated by a focused, balanced literacy approach to instruction. Teachers are skillful in planning and executing differentiated instruction to ensure student are engaged and have opportunities to access learning at different entry points to address individual learning needs. Professional development supports teachers effectively in ensuring that their pedagogic skills continue to grow and align with student needs. New teachers have "buddy" teachers that mentor their growth and support their instruction.

Effective programming decisions allow teacher teams to meet regularly and engage in collaborative planning and data-driven inquiry to affect targeted student needs. Inquiry teams focus on the needs of targeted students but are not engaging in work that influences school-wide instruction. School leaders have not yet formalized their methods of evaluating teacher teams and supporting their work in order to increase their value in improving pedagogic practice and student outcomes.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The effective use of data to set student learning goals results in differentiated instruction, high levels of student engagement and progress toward meeting students' learning targets.
  - The use of data by groups of teachers to set differentiated learning goals for individual students and groups of students brings about purposeful instruction that moves students toward reaching learning targets and leverages change in classroom practice.
  - Teachers plan and execute lessons that are differentiated, providing high levels of student engagement. Multiple entry points to learning mean that all students experience opportunities to connect effectively to content and skill development, resulting in instruction that meets the needs of individuals and all groups of students.
- Organizational decisions and allocation of resources align effectively to instructional goals, promoting collaboration among faculty to meet student needs.
  - School leaders use data well to identify school needs and are strategic in use of resources to support teachers in providing effective instruction to improve student progress. Consultants engage teachers in ongoing professional development to refine practice in a balanced literacy model of instruction. As a result, effective, consistent instructional practices are positively affecting student progress and performance.
  - School programming clearly aligns to achieving school goals. Teacher teams meet regularly to engage in vertical planning, inquiry, and sharing of best practices. Consequently, there is instructional coherence across the school and progress toward meeting student and school goals.
- Collaboration and communication with parents and the community promotes a clear vision and high expectations for students and partnerships to support progress.
  - School leaders and faculty continually engage parents in understanding the school's and students' goals, ensuring parents have the opportunity to be active partners in their children's education. Through regular school publications, online communication and conferences, parents have a clear understanding of the school's vision and feel as though they are partners in advancing their children's learning.
  - Effective partnerships with community organizations enrich the academic program of the school and provide families with external support that positively influences student performance. Teaching artists from the Brooklyn Center for the Arts engage students in visual arts that align to core curriculum, resulting in additional good opportunities to make progress toward learning targets. The Advantage Program provides after-school opportunities for academic intervention and enrichment as

well as providing students and families with social-emotional support. This enhances parents' ability to be supportive partners in their children's education.

- School leaders and faculty analyze data to understand individual student needs and the needs of groups of students, and they set goals that affect student learning.
  - School leaders collect and analyze data to determine a clear picture of strengths and areas in need of improvement. A tracking system allows staff to monitor student progress by subgroup. As a result, school leaders are able to identify trends and create meaningful, appropriate goals for these subgroups.
  - Teachers and teams of teachers analyze data to understand individual and groups of students' performance, allowing teachers to identify trends at the classroom level. As a result, planning and instruction has its foundations in the current needs of students.
- A common instructional focus and professional learning opportunities develop teachers' pedagogy, resulting in coherent practice throughout the school.
  - Teacher participation in a multitude of professional learning opportunities supports pedagogic practice and addresses individual needs for professional growth. An example of this is the "buddy teacher" system. Teachers new to the profession or new to the school work with a more experienced "buddy" teacher as a part of their support plan. The "buddy" teacher models effective practices, assists with lesson planning and offers feedback on executed lesson. As a result, new teachers are making good progress toward their professional goals, as evidenced by formal and informal observation and student learning outcomes.
  - School leaders clearly articulate the instructional focus with foundations in a balanced literacy model of instruction. Professional development focuses on strengthening pedagogic skill in depth of questioning and constructed response to support student performance in these areas. Consequently, consistency in practice and focus is apparent, resulting in coherence in instruction throughout the school.
- School leaders regularly evaluate curricular and instructional decisions, resulting in timely revisions to ensure alignment of practice to school goals.
  - Data review results in changes in practices throughout the school year. An example of this is the decision to end a consultant's method of literacy instruction when formative and summative data indicated that the program was not gaining the intended outcomes. As a result, school leaders with teacher support revised instructional practice to meet the needs of students.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Continue to develop the curriculum to provide rigorous, engaging instruction in all content areas that more effectively support the achievement of school goals.

- Curriculum maps are newly developed and do not yet include consistent rigor across all subject areas. As a result, students are not consistently engaging in rigorous activities that build critical thinking skills in subject areas other than English language arts and mathematics.
- The focus on expanding the use of “juicy”, tier 2 words to build student vocabulary is inconsistent throughout the school as evidenced by differences in verbal communication and classroom word walls and student work. Consequently, students receive varying degrees of support in advancing their vocabulary.
- Expand the capacity of faculty to engage in collaborative inquiry to impact effectively on instruction and evaluate systematically how teams influence student learning across the school.
  - Teacher teams use data analysis to target student groups for intervention to improve outcomes. However, these teams do not focus on using inquiry as a method of influencing curriculum, instruction, and assessment throughout the school. As a result, the impact of their work is limited just to these targeted groups of students or individual classrooms.
  - School leaders are informal in their methods of evaluating the effectiveness of teacher teams and supporting their development. This results in inconsistency in the impact each team is having on improving student outcomes and influencing school-wide progress.
- Continue to establish opportunities for parents to be involved in school decision making in order to nurture parents as contributing leaders of the school community.
  - Although parents are well informed and have a clear understanding of whole school goals, parent leaders are newly elected. As a result, they have not yet had the opportunity to actively participate in school-level planning, and the parent voice is minimal so far overall in school focus and vision.
- Develop methods to evaluate systems that assess student progress to ensure coherence on a school-wide and classroom level.
  - School leaders regularly evaluate individual assessments to monitor effectiveness in measuring student progress. However, there are limited structures in place to monitor consistency in the many assessments administered. This makes it difficult to ensure absolute accuracy in gauging student progress towards learning targets.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: The Bensonhurst School-	△	▶	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				<b>X</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	▶	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?				<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				X			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?		X					
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals 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 progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?			X				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		X					
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>