

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Edward Bleeker Junior High School

25Q185

**147-26 25th Drive
Flushing, New York 11354**

Principal: Mrs. Valerie E. Sawinski

Dates of review: March 24-25, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Danielle DiMango

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Edward Bleeker is a middle school with 1070 students from sixth through grade eight. The school population comprises 5% Black, 30% Hispanic, 18% White, and 45% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal makes strategic, data informed organizational decisions that support improvements in learning for students and staff.
 - The principal pulls from a variety of data sources to effectively disseminate resources to meet the schools instructional goals. The organizational structure of each grade level includes staff trained in the grade themes of architecture, medicine and social justice. Classes that reinforce these themes are scheduled and technology and software, such as Classroom inc., Brain Pop and Geometric sketch pad are intentionally selected to align to each focus area. Teams of an assistant principal, guidance counselor, dean and grade advisor are assigned to each grade. These teams study the learning needs of the students they are assigned with content teachers within each grade. Incorporated in this structure are targeted small group intervention classes scheduled during the day, and after school, to meet the needs of struggling learners and student subgroups. This structure provides the academic supports necessary to move students towards meeting the school wide instructional goals of informational writing in the content areas and higher level comprehension and content vocabulary strategies found in non-fiction text.
- Through effective data analysis, school leaders and staff have a clear understanding of student performance which informs curricular and instructional decisions.
 - The school's instructional team and faculty continuously evaluate data to identify students' learning needs and monitor outcomes of instructional decisions. Through school wide data analysis of summative data and student work products, consistent trends revealed the need to improve writing and vocabulary skills at the school level. These skills have become a focus to improve student outcomes in all content areas and are addressed in all classrooms.
 - School leaders and staff continuously monitor safety, attendance and disciplinary data and measure the impact of positive and negative trends on student learning, including the neediest subgroups. School level decisions to target and support these areas have led to increased student outcomes. For example, school wide attendance data has moved from ninety two to ninety four percent and suspensions have decreased nine percent this year.
- The administration and staff consistently use a variety of tools and assessments to align student outcomes to instructional improvements.
 - For the past three years, the school has worked to develop and implement assessments for individual and groups of students that sort and aggregate data from different sources by grade and subject area to effectively plan differentiated instruction. For example, in the science department, teachers consistently use exit slips to assess student understanding of a topic or lesson.
 - Individual teachers and inquiry teams meet weekly, with support from the school data specialist, to isolate periodic and classroom level data to better plan to meet the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities. Data

identified these two subgroups as falling within the bottom third and they have been targeted as the neediest learners within the school. This work has resulted in the sharing of instructional practices and tier one intervention strategies that have been implemented in the classrooms and have indicated growth in areas of writing and analyzing non-fiction text for these students.

- The school's cohesive cabinet has built a school wide vision by developing clear goals and action plans that focus on improving student outcomes
 - The principal and her instructional team have a plan of action in place that fosters student social, emotional and academic growth with a focus on meeting state standards and college and career readiness. School goals are developed through a rigorous needs assessment process which includes school walkthroughs with a focused lens, collaboration with the school leadership team and by looking at how student work products are aligned to curricular expectations. The school's culture and curriculum is supported and enhanced through work with a plethora of outside organizations supported through grants and the goals in place through the school magnet program. Examples include work with museums, teaching artists, world renowned musicians, and major corporations. Through these additional supports aligned to student needs and instructional goals, the school is better able to promote student success.
- The administration and staff use clear systems and criteria to improve instructional practice and support the school's vision.
 - The school administration has a cohesive process used to support the individual needs of teachers. Recommendations on formal and informal observations evaluate teacher planning and delivery of content as well as teacher growth in terms of the school wide expectations of differentiation and increased student engagement. They are used to develop individual professional development plans and monitored throughout the year to build teacher capacity towards achieving school goals.
 - Teachers actively participate to support the culture of professional development within the school. Using practices based on Richard Elmore's work with instructional rounds, teachers focus on the school's common instructional focus through mentoring and classroom visitation practices. This collaborative culture supports new teachers and increases outcomes for students.
- Teacher teams meet consistently to analyze student work and other relevant data to make informed instructional decisions that enhance student learning school wide.
 - All teachers within the building are engaged in the inquiry process and meet weekly to plan common instructional strategies that focus on areas of need identified within student work products of students they share. As a result of one round of study this year, a group of teachers began developing lesson plans to frontload targeted areas of weakness by addressing skills within the do now of a lesson. This work addresses the targeted needs of students school wide.
 - Inquiry teams are structured to allow for rotational leadership where different teachers from within each team have an opportunity to plan an agenda for inquiry discussion. As a result of this structure, teachers are exposed to a variety of leadership styles, instructional practices and areas of expertise in particular licenses that help them meet the diverse needs of the learners throughout the school, including the neediest subgroups.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the work of lesson planning, task development and effective feedback to students that are more closely aligned to key standards to create higher levels of challenge to accelerate student progress.
 - There is evidence of teacher work in developing rigorous tasks aligned to the standards and some teachers provide non-specific feedback to students throughout the school. However, there is a misalignment between key standards emphasized within the curriculum and focused feedback from teachers to students. This limits student progress towards meeting standards identified by the school.
 - Teachers are using data when planning tasks aligned to the curriculum. However, there are gaps in the design of these tasks that do not support the diversity of accelerated learners within the school affecting higher levels of thinking and challenging work for these students.
- Improve the consistency of the differentiation of classroom learning activities and tasks to provide appropriate challenge to all students to maximize student learning.
 - Applying differentiated strategies within the classroom is a school wide goal this year. The staff has begun to implement improved methods of creating tiered lessons with multiple entry points to more accurately address specific student needs. However, at this point, differentiated support for accelerated learners varies throughout classrooms affecting student engagement in their learning, work products and learning outcomes for these students.
- Extend communication with students and parents around the school's instructional goals, student progress towards achieving these goals and ways parents can support the learning needs of their children to increase student outcomes.
 - The school has not fully developed consistent structures of feedback for parents that clearly explain student strengths and weaknesses and ways parents can work towards meeting the schools expectations of the academic needs of their children. As a result, parents do not fully understand how to measure student progress beyond standardized test scores and report card grades.
 - In some classrooms there is evidence of feedback, such as the effective use of rubrics, which allow students to be reflective of their work. In other classrooms, systems are not fully developed where students are expected to evaluate their work as it relates to the standards. These inconsistencies result in uneven levels of student awareness of their individual growth, next steps and learning outcomes.
- Establish more consistency in monitoring long and short term learning goals so they are consistently adjusted by staff, clearly understood by students and shared with parents.
 - Currently, goal setting practices are evident in classrooms throughout the school. However, there are not clear systems, school wide or on the classroom level, for tracking progress of interim or long term learning goals or for measuring student outcomes relating to them. As a result, school leaders and teachers can not accurately assess if adequate progress is being made in targeted areas.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name:	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		X		
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?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
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.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?		X		

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.

<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

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.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

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.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

Quality Review Scoring Key

UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed
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