

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Bloomingdale School

Elementary School M145

**150 West 105th Street
Manhattan
NY 10025**

Principal: Ivelisse Alvarez

Dates of review: March 8-9, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Eileen Waters

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Bloomingdale School is an elementary school with 444 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 28% Black, 59% Hispanic, 7% White, 2% Asian and 2% multi-racial students. The student body includes 19% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 90.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has a respectful culture that strives to build student poise and enrich professional growth so that learning is nurtured. (1.4)
 - The school has adopted the Magnet Program, a multi-media approach to education that supports students' development of the new literacy skills of the 21st century. This decision has transitioned the school into a multi-media learning community where teachers are collaborating to strengthen the curriculum, students are being exposed to range of academic tasks and parents are gaining knowledge of strategies to support their child's learning at home. From the beliefs of the Magnet Program, school leaders have seen a shift in teacher and student confidence when taking on novel tasks as part of the learning curve and students are interacting more with technology during their learning.
 - The Child Study Team meets regularly to look at the whole child through classroom level data, observations, attendance and behavioral data to make decisions about supports so that progress is monitored over time. Students feel the guidance counselor and their teachers provide them guidance to make positive decisions when faced with challenging situations. With the addition of a separate middle school into the building, students became concerned with acts of bullying. By working with the school staff, students discussed bullying and created posters on display throughout the building against it. Student members of the School Leadership Team have organized a meeting with the leadership of the middle school in order to discuss concerns and possible solutions.
- The school staff collaborates with various partnerships and internal personnel to expose students to experiential learning that prepares students for higher education. (4.4)
 - Students share that the collaboration with the Historical Society impacts on their retention of content through the use of artifacts to support the curricula. Staff and parents volunteer their time on Saturdays to work with the chess team, who will be competing in Nationals this year. Parents support their child's participation in the Battle of the Books through Columbia, which fosters a strong desire to read and complete as a team against peers. Other partnerships work with teachers in strengthening the curriculum by supporting the persuasion work students produce, providing students with real world tasks, such as creating commercials and encouraging artistic skills through the use of multiple mediums. Internal capacities support students' communication skills by having them interview community members with stories to share that result in school newspaper articles and interview experience as they prepare for the middle school application process. The investment of these various partnerships and experiential learning opportunities nurture students' academic and social emotional confidence.
 - Recognizing an increase in student anxiety, especially from the stress of State exams, staff members receive professional support to aid them in helping students cope with anxiety-driven situations. Fifth grade students build their interview skills by conversing with staff and community members prior to the middle school interview process. Through workshops and collaboration with the

district, staff members prepare students and families regarding the middle school selection process and ways to ensure the selection best suits the needs of the child.

- School leaders analyze a range of data to inform their instructional and organizational choices so that students receive additional supports. (2.1)
 - The administration's analysis of data has surfaced areas of improvement for both staff and students. From an analysis of student work, school leaders identified that teachers need additional support around the utilization of rubrics to guide student learning and strengthen their feedback practices to students. Observational and survey data led to professional development for staff on curriculum mapping, instructional bundles and Depth of Knowledge. Based on student performance data, the principal is working towards moving away from the reading program to more chapter books and infusing literacy in to the interdisciplinary units being crafted. The school level analysis of data assist school leaders in making decisions that align with staff and students' needs through organizational choices.
- The administration makes purposeful organizational decisions to support the school's goals that foster growth in the school community. (1.3)
 - School leaders keep the vision of the Magnet program and the talents of the staff in mind as they make organization choices to support the school's goals. Cluster teachers have had their roles expanded to teach literacy, ensuring the entire staff has ownership in moving the students. The library media center and the creation of a computer lab cluster position supports students to complete power point projects, essays and reports. A parent volunteer provides read alouds of stories and plays to students that has captivated student interest and supported student learning. The strategic movement of staff from upper grades to lower grades to build the capacity of colleague's data analysis practices and the placement of an effective staff member to work specifically with English language learners is gradually building teacher capacity and addressing groups of students' needs.
- The school community involves families in educational activities and discussions around student progress to build parental capacity so that academic achievement is fostered. (2.4)
 - The Magnet Team informs parents of what students will be learning within the disciplinary unit with a detailed overview of the culminating project and the rubric. Parents have also been provided with workshops to help them understanding the literacy and Magnet programs in the school, along with useful strategies to support their child's literacy growth, and online resources parents can use to see their child's performance and communicate with teachers. The school is pushing parents to use the Internet more often to assist in their child's learning and has opened the library's media center to provide families with computer access. The school is also attracting more parents by offering computer classes on how to create word documents and utilizing the Internet. In support of the school's goal to increase parent involvement, meetings include yoga or jewelry making to peak parents' interest and have boosted attendance. Holiday trips to places like the Museum of the Moving Image, music recitals at Lincoln Center and family movie nights have parents taking a more active role in celebrating and supporting their child's academic learning and utilizing educational resources within the community.

What the school needs to improve

- Further the development of curricula to embed academic tasks that target data trends so that all students are cognitively challenged across all subject areas. (1.1)
 - The staff is in the early stages of creating interdisciplinary units for science and social studies. These evolving units focus around guiding questions and enduring understandings that are supported by low level focus questions that are addressed in daily lessons. While teacher input frames these units, they have not yet incorporated planning to address students' academic deficits so that the achievement gap decreases. The school follows program pacing calendars for literacy and math instruction. Although these calendars keep instruction aligned, they limit teachers' opportunity to make purposeful choices within the curriculum in order to embed key standards that address data trends so that student progress advances.
 - Instructional plans surfaced a variation of practices ranging from purposeful planning to general notes. Some teachers provide a clear process towards achieving the learning objective through hooking students interest, varying student entry points, building in student discussion and reflection times, and capturing critical thinking questions to be utilized to assess student learning. Other practices portray a sequential approach for the teacher to follow minus planning that targets student's needs, assesses their learning and incorporates deliberate instructional practices. Such inconsistencies in curricula design hinder students from consistently receiving challenging academic tasks that engage their thinking in rigorous learning activities.
- Elevate pedagogical practices through instructionally based feedback that explicitly captures teacher capacity and areas for growth in order to enhance teacher and student progress. (4.1)
 - The administration provides teachers with feedback from informal and formal observations, however the quality of feedback is inconsistent across the administrators. Few observations capture a link to student mastery of the learning objective and provide evidence that supports teacher's pedagogical strengths. Many observations capture identical commendations and recommendations across teachers without specifically highlighting teacher's unique skills. For example, multiple teachers are commended for reinforcing important skills, clear expectations and showing evidence of planning. Some teachers are provided the same recommendations, such as establish professional goals, across multiple observations over time. A next step offered to create a classroom environment that promotes independence and learning was not evident during classroom visits. Although teachers receive feedback, the content of the feedback does not serve in furthering teacher practice, which hinders student learning.
- Continue to develop classroom methodologies so that teachers strategically utilize instructional practices that result in all students being empowered to become independent thinkers. (1.2)
 - Although the school values that students need to learn information in different ways through multiple sensory and technology embedded pedagogical practices, this practice is not evident across classrooms. Some classrooms reflect group work and employ instructional choices to best meet students' learning needs, with lessons that offer students multi-sensory venues to learn concepts. Other

classrooms offer all students to complete the same objective even though students are demonstrating varying levels of mastery.

- The school believes that student thinking is measured in the level of responses student provide to questions that allow teachers to understand what students have learned. In classrooms, some teachers asked low level recall questions or process questions to engage students. Some observational feedback capture that all students are engaged during lessons, however evidence that captures students' cognitive engagement is missing. In the absence of efficient teaching strategies that consistently use questioning techniques to effectively stretch students' cognitive levels, students miss opportunities to engage in deep, thought-provoking discussions with peers that support the production of high quality work.
- Build upon teachers' assessment practices so that analysis of ongoing data collection leads to curricula and pedagogical refinements that improve student progress. (2.2)
 - Teachers gather classroom level data from common sources, such as running record, AIMSweb and Acuity to review student performance. Using AIMSweb, teachers select three students to track progress of during the year, while faculty completing the Teacher Performance Review tracks eight students. While the Magnet team is creating rubrics to align with the interdisciplinary units, classroom teachers create or adopt rubrics within their class that are not typically aligned with the key standards of focus within the unit. Although these assessment routines are in practice, they are not yet at a level that effectively fosters a precise analysis of student performance or the effectiveness of curricula and instructional decisions. As a result, adjustments that would adequately address students data informed needs are not made in a manner that advances student learning.
 - Self-assessment and peer assessment practices among students occur sporadically across the school. Some students share that they self assess using a rubric so that they can improve their work. Some teachers have students complete a checklist and provide comments to peers when assessing student work. Although these assessment practices continue to emerge, they have not yet been rooted in instructional practices across the school in a manner that increases students' independent thinking.
- Formalize tracking structures to capture achievement over time so that progress monitoring leads to attainment of instructional goals. (3.3)
 - School leaders and teachers use online skills program to monitor student progress. Some classroom teachers monitor student growth through various sources, specifically the movement of their yearlong target group. Although the principal can verbalize an estimate of students currently meeting standards, a definite knowledge of where the school is towards meeting their goal of all students making one year of progress is unknown. A baseline of students' starting point along with interim benchmarks in order to measure one year's progress has not been explicitly shared, thus hindering the capacity to monitor growth.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Bloomingdale School	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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?		X		
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?			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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?		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, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS?		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