



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**The School of Business, Finance and
Entrepreneurship**

**Middle School 385
125 Stuyvesant Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11208**

Principal: Glyn Marryshow

**Dates of review: April 3-4, 2008
Lead Reviewer: Diana Shepherd**

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well
What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review
Overall evaluation
How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The School for Business, Finance and Entrepreneurship is a middle school with 308 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 81.8% Black, 16.2% Hispanic, and 1.3% Asian students. The student body includes 3.9% English language learners and 28% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 85.1%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 71% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's positive culture ensures high levels of trust and commitment from all members of the community.
- The school is developing systems, which will enable them to evaluate student achievement and to set measurable goals for future improvement.
- There is good collaboration between all teams of teachers contributing to the development of the learning community.
- The parent coordinator has introduced efficient communication systems so parents are well informed about student achievement.
- Academic intervention services ensure that special education students make good progress.
- The open-door policy and good collaboration between staff makes parents feel welcome and encourages exchange of information.
- Students are respectful and express appreciation for the support their teachers give for learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure the outcomes of previous plans inform and drive an objective and measured improvement plan, which supports achievement for all students.
- Ensure that all plans have measurable goals in order to be able to identify the impact on achievement of instruction and interventions.
- Ensure that all teachers are consistently differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners.
- Provide a broad and engaging curriculum to enhance learning.
- Closely align professional development with the teachers' goals in order to ensure that training meets the needs of all teachers.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The School for Business, Finance and Entrepreneurship is a small middle school. It has made some progress towards addressing the issues identified in the last Quality Review. Effective data systems are in place and all teams make use of them to inform goal setting and regular revision. The administration has taken actions to include both the parent and student voice in decision-making. Parents now sit on the school leadership team and this is a useful improvement. The student government is in its infancy, but is developing well. Regular conferencing supports the accuracy of goals set to improve student outcomes. However, these goals relate to scale scores and not to improvements in learning. There are few exemplars of standards to support students' understanding of what they need to do to make progress. Data analysis has informed the work of the inquiry team and although it is still in its early stages, it has the potential to provide useful information to support effective differentiated instruction. The school works hard to ensure that it offers a broad curriculum and collaborates with the neighboring school to offer music. As a result, the students experience a range of athletic and other activities as well as art. Art is taught as part of the school day and there are some good examples of drawing and painting to be seen around the school.

The professional development program makes good use of the strengths of the coaches in math and English language arts. Teachers, however, do not work thematically in order to better integrate subjects such as social studies and make them more accessible to the full range of students and, as a result, learning is fragmented. Communication is good and parents receive information about their children's goals and achievements in a timely manner. They welcome the open-door culture and the opportunities to share information. This promotes good levels of trust and mutual respect. Strategic planning remains an area for further development. The school has taken effective steps to ensure that data drives goals and that collaborative plans are made to meet them. Yet, these plans are not drawn together under a coordinated umbrella in order to meet the needs of students and teachers and ensure that achievement is improved across all grades.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school collects a range of data and uses it to set goals for all groups of students, including those at risk of not being promoted. Acuity is the primary tool and teachers also use unit assessments and test results to measure progress. Teachers use skills and question-level analysis to identify gaps in learning. They are starting to look at trends across grades and classes but this work is in its early stages. They set broad goals for improvement and the administration allocates resources as necessary. The school tracks the achievement of English language learners and special education students. They take account of all data, including the outcomes of NYSESLAT, progress against individual education plan goals and absence data. This gives a full picture of each student. Through this process, the school has identified certain trends in achievement. Writing, and in particular boys' writing, is an area for improvement. The school uses the achievement and progress of cohort schools as benchmarks and judges its performance to be broadly proficient. There is ongoing training for staff on using Acuity and in addition, the training in Microsoft office enables teachers to use and understand Excel as the school presents many of the spreadsheets in this form. However, the use of data to inform instruction is limited and inconsistent.

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 has implemented systems for using data to set goals, which are not yet fully embedded. They have the potential to ensure that the school can use its data efficiently to plan for and improve students' achievement. The administration uses data from Acuity and Kaplan to draw up weekly plans for improvement in focus areas for each grades. They review and revise these plans at weekly grade and faculty meetings. Plans include goals for all, including special education students and these goals are broad. For example, "students will make two reading levels in a three-month period". The goals are imprecise and, as a result, lack challenge or aspiration. There is little focus on students achieving Level 4. English language learners get specific support from a specialist teacher. Students at risk of not being promoted are identified early through analysis of data and plans are drawn up to support them with the full involvement of their parents. This ensures that many make progress and are not held over. The inquiry team is looking closely at one area, which has been identified as a priority. They are evaluating the progress made by students in writing and, in particular, at the impact of motivation on the quality and quantity of writing produced. It is too early to identify the full impact of this work, but early indicators show that specific strategies will help boys to achieve better than they do currently. Communication is good and all meetings are well structured and organized. As a result, all members of the community share whole-school goals and indeed, they are on display clearly around the school. The majority of students can describe their goals but are less clear about the steps they

need to take in order to achieve them. Parents report that they get regular and timely information. The parent coordinator has good systems to ensure that parents are well informed and these work well. He has organized useful workshops, such as a family math night and a technology session, which aimed to improve the parents' skills in this area. The school surveys parents and the feedback shows that they appreciate the support the school gives them. They feel able to approach the administration and the teachers to give them information about all issues relating to their children.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school is reviewing the math and the English language arts curricula. Both coaches are working together to support the process. They use data well to track progress and to identify any deficits in understanding and develop plans to address these. Specifically, they have identified difficulties in the students' understanding and interpretation of instructional language, in particular when solving word problems. As a result, they are collaborating closely to plan strategies for improvement. The school has introduced the new math curriculum incrementally and the coach reports that there have been improvements in the math scores in the focus grades. The English language arts curriculum is currently based on two standards, which may lead to a lack of clarity for teachers when planning for instruction. Outside the core curriculum, the art teacher teaches all grades and there are very good examples of artwork around the school. Overall, instruction is not differentiated to meet the needs of students and therefore the levels of engagement are inconsistent across the grades. This small school holds teachers to account through scrutiny of progress data, and formal and informal monitoring of instruction. Teachers have binders, which include all relevant data and they plan together to ensure a shared approach to differentiated instruction. However, it was evident from the instruction observed that they often rely on undifferentiated worksheets and low-level tasks, which do not meet the needs of all students. Conferencing is a common strategy in English language arts and the administration offers support through pacing calendars and aggregated data, but the impact on instruction and achievement is limited so far. The administration uses data well to inform strategic budgetary decisions. Certified staffing is a priority and so are improvements in the basic curriculum materials and after-school activities. The culture of collaboration is developing well. Teams work effectively together and foster respect amongst all in the school community. This has a positive impact on the social and emotional development of students and is beginning to support academic development. Yet, attendance is an ongoing issue despite good systems and efforts of all the staff.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The administration regularly monitors instruction formally and informally. They have established clear expectations for planning and for the organization of classrooms. The

impact of this is evident in some classes but not in all. Teachers have goals for improvement and the assistant principal keeps a log of progress. The cabinet reviews and revises the program for professional development based on the trends identified through observation. Intervisitations and collaboration between teachers is a developing element of professional development. Coaches work together and alongside teachers to improve subject knowledge and they share good practice through grade and faculty meetings. New teachers receive the necessary support, including mentoring. The impact of professional development overall, however, is not fully evident in either differentiation or the quality of learning environments. The cabinet keeps an overview spreadsheet of all support given to students. Each grade is allocated additional instruction through both push-in and pull-out teachers. The student personnel committee, which consists of all the professionals providing social, emotional and academic support for students, meets regularly to review the goals set for students and revise them as necessary. This supports the good progress made by the lowest-achieving students. There are effective systems in place to ensure the school runs smoothly. Behavior is generally good and all members of the school community, including parents, fully understand the policy and procedures for managing discipline issues. Movement around the school is orderly and students show respect towards each other and towards adults. The administration has established good partners in the business world, which provide useful practical and educational support for the business aspect of the school's work. The school also works closely with a local organization, which offers safe and interesting after-school activities for students.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for 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 school uses data to identify whole-school goals for improving both student and teacher outcomes. They have developed systems to regularly review and revise these goals. Teams work well together to ensure this process supports improvements for all students. The inclusion of objective and measurable interim goals in these plans is still an issue and weakens the school's capacity to evaluate its progress towards overall goals. The school's use of periodic assessments and diagnostic tools to analyze the effectiveness of plans is inconsistent. Some teachers use this information well and others need more support in order to confidently make revisions to plans and improve the achievement of students. The administration understands the requirement to use the information from Acuity in order to drive both goal setting and planning and is beginning to use it to make strategic decisions and revise plans and modify practice. The school reviews the Comprehensive Education Plan annually and there is evidence to show that the school is meeting its goals. However, the inconsistencies in the quality of instruction do not support sustained improvements in achievement and progress. The vision for the school is clearly articulated and visible around the school but here is a mismatch between the rhetoric and reality relating to achievement. There is strong commitment from all staff to ensure that the school improves. However, the lack of a clear strategic plan, drawing together all the identified priorities means that improvements are not fully coordinated.

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?			X		
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?			X		
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?			X		
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?			X		
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?			X		
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?			X		
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X		

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?			X		
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?		X			
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X		

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped