



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Bayard Rustin Educational Complex

High School 440

**351 West 18 Street
New York
NY 10011**

Principal: John Angelet

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Lead Reviewer: Peter Lewis

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Bayard Rustin Educational Complex is a high school with 2026 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 25% Black, 55% Hispanic, and 15%, Asian students, with 5% from other backgrounds. The student body includes 25% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 78.9%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 66% eligibility.

The school is in its fourth year of restructuring from a single high school, into four distinct small learning communities, each of which has its own director.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school collects and analyzes data well to give a clear picture of student achievement and needs.
- Well-planned interventions have a positive impact on the learning of students whose performance gives the greatest concern.
- The curriculum is broad and well planned with good opportunities for enrichment.
- Relationships between students and between students and adults are strong and have a positive impact on achievement.
- The development of small learning communities has been successful in strengthening relationships and in raising achievement.
- Regular monitoring increasingly provides leaders with an appropriate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching.
- The school accurately identifies areas for whole school improvement using student data and the outcomes of monitoring.
- The principal and other leaders are highly visible and well respected by staff, students and parents.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve consistency in teachers' use of data in planning lessons that challenge all students.
- Ensure that objectives for learning are clearly set and communicated so that teachers and students know they have made progress.
- Establish and agree the key characteristics of teaching and of learning which set the standards and expectations in all lessons.
- Refine formal and informal monitoring of instruction to focus more precisely on student learning than on what teachers have done.
- Refine whole school planning so that expected changes in practice are defined, together with the small steps and timescales required towards their achievement.

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 principal and other leaders are committed to improving the effectiveness of the school's work and, in particular, to improving the outcomes for students. The staff share this commitment and, as a result, demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

There is a good understanding of data, used particularly at senior level, in identifying patterns of student performance and, as a result, in planning appropriate interventions. This is particularly the case for the lowest performing students and those whose achievement gives cause for concern. The development of the work of the inquiry team has been effective in helping the school further refine its understanding of the needs of its lowest performing students. The school acknowledges that it is less effective at fully challenging its higher achieving students and is using well-planned professional development in order to address this. The school provides data, training and support to teachers which monitoring information suggests is beginning to make a difference. The school recognizes that teachers' planning focuses too often on the demands of the curriculum, with all students undertaking the same activity regardless of their level of understanding. Relationships throughout the school are good. This represents an improvement from the situation that prevailed before the establishment of the four small learning communities.

Since the last Quality Review, improvements in the collection and analysis of data have enabled the school to monitor student performance more accurately. Consequently, there is rapid identification of any shortfall in performance followed by planned and timely interventions. Although teachers receive data, there is a range of understanding among staff as to the best ways in which to make use of the information. This is because there is no agreement as to the features of teaching that are most effective in improving learning.

Planning for school improvement is comprehensive but, at present, lacks sufficient detail to enable the school to track its progress sufficiently. Consequently, there are inconsistencies in the understanding that staff have of required improvements, and of their role in bringing those improvements about.

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 well developed.

The school has collated a comprehensive set of data that provides a clear picture of student attainment across subjects, classes and grades. It makes comparisons between the achievement of students from one year to the next, rather than simply considering grade performance year on year. Effective use is made of interim assessments to identify where there may be weaknesses in students' learning. School leaders use this information well in planning appropriate interventions.

Directors of the small learning communities make good use of data in helping teachers to select appropriate resources and programs. The development of the school's comprehensive literacy plan stemmed from the identification of low literacy levels on entry to the school. The school makes careful comparison of the performance of each grade, which has enabled it to identify weaknesses in particular aspects of reading and writing.

There is a good focus on the performance of lower achieving students. The school compares information gathered from a scrutiny of student work and attendance patterns with test and internal assessment results. This helps the school to identify patterns and trends across subjects, and grades. Although a comparison of performance between students in the small learning communities is a relatively recent development, nonetheless good use is made of the information to identify areas for improvement. Leaders in the school have used their good understanding of the use of data in ensuring that staff plan lessons in relation to students' different needs. The principal acknowledges that there remain inconsistencies in teachers' confidence in applying this information to their planning. Appropriate plans are in place to build in more training to continue to develop teachers' confidence in using data to plan work.

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 made a good start in using data to refine its ability to recognize potential underachievement and to take action. Data from baseline assessments taken by freshmen, for example, enables an accurate evaluation to be made of students' potential and prior knowledge, particularly in English language arts. The success of this process is evident particularly in the gains made by English language learners and special education students. The school focuses well on the needs of students whose performance is giving concern. It identifies dips in learning promptly, and plans and monitors appropriate action.

The school's planning follows the required format. Goals for student achievement are set in consultation between leaders, teachers and intervention staff and are increasingly well-tracked using interim assessments. The school communicates its high expectations

of student and teacher performance effectively to parents. The principal and small learning community directors regularly review student achievement after each marking period, which provides a forum to share issues common to different departments. The school acknowledges that the effectiveness with which teachers use data to inform their planning varies too much. However, senior leaders have made effective use of data in ensuring that grade and department meetings focus on necessary modifications.

The principal acknowledges that goals for planned organizational change are not set as clearly nor, as a result, referred to as regularly by staff and leaders. While, for example, the school has identified differences in student performance across different subjects between the small learning communities, it has not developed specific plans to address these differences. In contrast, the introduction of the school's comprehensive literacy plan has been carefully staged to make all staff aware of changes that are expected.

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's curriculum is broad and well planned. There is considerable emphasis on planning enrichment activities and opportunities for providing extra help for students whose progress is causing concern. The school has recognized the potential of planning links across curriculum areas and, through shared planning involving core and cluster teachers within the small learning communities, has moved well towards this. The development of the comprehensive literacy plan followed the careful analysis of data. While some early data from the groups involved seems to indicate gains, it is too early to measure the full impact of this initiative.

The increased focus on data has helped the school in setting clear expectations for staff. As a result, their sense of accountability has increased. The school has provided training in the use of data in differentiating planning, and this has had a positive impact on teachers' practice. A grade 9 English as a second language reading lesson for example, was very successful in engaging students' active participation through focused and probing discussion that took account of students' different levels of understanding. However, in most lessons, teachers too readily accept one or two word answers from students. This fails to promote their language development sufficiently. Across the school, there is too great an emphasis on all students undertaking the same activity, regardless of their level of understanding. Combined with a general weakness in setting learning objectives that are precise and measurable, this makes it difficult for teachers and students to assess their success.

Teachers and other adults demonstrate a good level of commitment to their students. They have promoted this through the phased restructuring of the school into small learning communities. Positive relationships are the norm, and reflected in the good behavior and attitudes of students. Attendance has been a serious cause for concern for the school, which, as a result, has developed a good range of systems for monitoring patterns of student attendance. These have been broadly successful in securing improvement, although an issue remains concerning the students from the original high school.

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.

Professional development is a strong priority for the school and has been at the heart of the improvements over time. Teachers have received good communication about strategies for the development of data and its interpretation, for example. School monitoring indicates improvement in the regularity with which teachers access and update student records. At the same time, the emphasis on the development of the comprehensive literacy plan has seen improvements in the focus placed on improving students' comprehension. The initial roll out of training to teachers who demonstrated interest and potential is a sensible move and one that has been successful in ensuring that other staff now see the benefits of this development. Planning time and regular common professional development focuses increasingly well on data, and is effectively supported by intervisitation. The principal and small learning community directors make good use of an established protocol for lesson observations, which is useful, particularly for new teachers. These provide good opportunities for feedback. However, the school recognizes that while there is an appropriate emphasis on what teachers do, there is too little focus on what students learn as a result. Effective use is made of the information gained from this monitoring at individual small community level but is not sufficiently used to inform whole school decisions. For example, although the school has recognized differences in student performance between subjects and the communities, it has yet to identify common features of strength and areas for development. This hampers it in planning for improvement.

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's effectively uses its good understanding of student achievement in setting goals. The regular review of student progress informs the setting of timeframes. Leaders and teachers are increasingly skilled in tracking student progress using periodic and interim assessments, a process helped by the establishment of benchmark assessments when students enter the school. As a result, the school has a clear picture, particularly for those causing concern, of strengths in student learning and areas in which improvement is required. This means that the school can undertake modifications to work and to teachers' planning in a timely manner. The school acknowledges that this focus on the lower end of student achievement, while entirely correct, means that it often gives too low a profile to the needs of higher attaining students. Staff have an appropriate understanding of the school's priorities for whole school development. However, because the school has not sufficiently communicated the implications of the changes that are required, there is a wide range of understanding of the new elements of classroom practice that staff will need to master. The school keeps an informal track of how well it is moving towards identified change, for example in the development of strategies for differentiation. However, the lack of descriptors, or of timeframes within which particular elements of practice will be in place, hampers the school in assessing the progress that it is making.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Bayard Rustin Educational Complex	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score			X		

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?				X	
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

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 students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area?				X	
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?			X		
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?			X		
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X		

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.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?			X		
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?			X		
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X		

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