



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**EDWARD BLEEKER SCHOOL**

**Middle School 185**

**147- 26 25 Drive  
Queens  
NY 11354**

**Principal: Valerie Sawiniski**

**Dates of review: October 9 - 11, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Richard Woolf**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Edward Bleeker is a middle school with 1025 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 4.4% Black, 33.1% Hispanic, 18.8% White, and 43.7% Asian students. The student body includes 13% 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 94.5%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 60% eligibility.

This is the first year Edward Bleeker has been a grade 6 through grade 8 school. Previously it was grade 7 through grade 9.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school arts program is an excellent example of how an enhanced curriculum is helping to develop the whole person.
- There are effective measures in place to ensure attendance is of the highest priority.
- The school uses data very effectively to inform all aspects of its work.
- The identification and support given to groups of a particular focus is very good.
- The adoption of a positive behavior management policy has been beneficial to improving all students learning.
- The parents are fully supportive of the school's vision and how it is developing the future of their children's education.
- The school is clean and attractive but above all conducive to learning.
- The school is well led and managed by an experienced principal who is fully supported by a professional group of teachers.

### What the school needs to improve

- Provide better training for all faculty members in data analysis.
- Share whole-school goals with the school community to demonstrate progress of students' performance.
- Ensure effective differentiation occurs in all classrooms.

## 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 well developed.**

Edward Bleeker school is making significant progress in every aspect of its work since it moved from a junior high to a middle school. There is recognition by staff, students and parents of a calmer atmosphere, which is much more conducive to learning. The inclusions of certain key initiatives have been instrumental in effecting this change around.

The school is rightly proud of its achievements and these include an ever-improving number of students gaining very good outcomes in State tests, especially in math. This is coupled with the growing recognition its students have in competitions, locally and across the City, in a variety of different events. The acknowledgement of the school's own website is an example of good practice and its format is shared with a number of schools within the district. The site is very successful in meeting its aims to improve channels of communication, whereby students and parents can access it for both academic and social events as well as homework assignments. The school provides a warm, caring and stable environment, which enhances the students' learning experiences.

Since the last Quality Review, the school has made some progress in addressing the areas for improvement. These are specifically in the area of professional development and the inclusion of outside organizations like, CHAMPS, Sports and the Arts and the Mets baseball math program. The development of the inquiry team, its method of working and the manner in which it has progressed, is exemplary.

### 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 is making very effective use of the data it collects to improve the educational opportunities of its students. The principal clearly demonstrates how data informs progress across the school and the impact it has on learning. The introduction of a positive behavior policy, which has significantly improved the students' classroom behavior, is a direct result of a close analysis of data.

The school is constantly looking at ways of improving the learning outcomes of its special education students, English language learners and other focus groups. The efficient use of data results in the better use of its teachers in aligning with these groups. The creation of the "Triad" classes, where three teaching groups have been formed from two classes, to meet better the individual needs of the students, is a good example of data informing practice. The school's administration closely monitors this initiative to show overall

progress of the students involved. Approximately the same number of boys as girls populates the school and current data analysis reveals little difference in gender outcomes based on testing outcomes. However, the school identifies Black boys as not performing as well as other ethnic groups and this has alerted them to respond positively to their needs by ensuring they attend the period 9 extended day provision.

The school provides a great deal of evidence to show how comparative analysis with their own yearly performance is ensuring progress over time. The assistant principals move with their grades each year and the data they collate over time is assisting them to improve overall performance. The school is justifiably proud of the progress it has made when comparing itself to similar and peer schools and the principal uses this as an indicator of progress. Despite some significant progress, the school does not yet have systems in place to ensure all teachers receive the same message relating to the importance of data use. The school acknowledges this and the newly created inquiry team have been given a mandate to readdress this imbalance.

**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 well developed.**

The school successfully uses its Comprehensive Education Plan to guide planning. From this, staff develop curriculum plans to guide their instruction. The overarching goal is to progress each student by one grade level per year. The principal realizes this is being ambitious but after three years in the school, she expects all her students to graduate able and confident to take their place in society. The school uses pacing calendars and internal and external interim assessments to validate students’ progress and this aids any realignment that is deemed necessary.

The school uses a vast array of formative data, to identify the students in need of extra tutoring. This ensures their individual strengths and weaknesses are effectively addressed. An assistant principal is responsible for the overseeing those students falling into the category of special education. The effect of this has been to raise student expectations as to what they can achieve. The teachers adjust their teaching strategies to plan next-learning steps and ensure alignment to the state standards. The administration adopts a number of different ways in sharing its goals with teachers, students and parents. However, whilst some of these have been effective, the school does not yet share them on a regular basis with the same rigor as it does other aspects of its work.

The school does share the high expectations it has of its students and parents. As a result, there are mechanisms in place to maintain student and parent involvement. These include parent-student and parent-teacher meetings at appropriate times during the week as evidenced by the parent and child-reading club. The Saturday morning school ensures students who breach the school’s rules and rituals have them positively reinforced. The school is adopting a more proactive way of individual target setting with the students but appreciates it is still at an early stage of development. The parents are aware of their children’s grade levels and the school’s plans to progress them. They appreciate how the school keeps them informed of periodic and yearly progress through informal and formal channels of communication.

**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 well developed.**

The school offers a broad and engaging curriculum, which includes the teaching of Spanish, physical education and the opportunity to use technology. A superb arts program that offers fine arts, music and a further opportunity to participate in drama and dance after school enhances this. Each student has a choice as to which part of the program they undertake.

The principal and her assistants are constant reminders that their daily involvement with students are holding teachers’ accountable for instruction. There are excellent examples of how differentiated instruction is improving overall achievement. However, the school does not yet demonstrate a consistency of approach to modeling this across the entire staff. Teachers are afforded, the opportunity to meet and exchange data on their individual classes and subjects they teach. The teachers use the school’s website to post daily homework as both parents and students can access this. This is proving to be an effective avenue of communication. The standard of homework has risen considerably since its inception, and the impact is evidenced by higher outcomes in a range of indicators that include improved results in tests.

The school has invested a great deal of time in the introduction of its positive behavior policy and this has a dramatic effect on teaching and learning. Students who are new to the school are pleased to share “give me five”, which outlines the types of behaviors and responsibilities that are acceptable in providing a positive working atmosphere. The older students feel the approach has enhanced their achievements as more of them now focus on their learning. The data generated by the reduction in suspensions and deans’ referrals pays testimony to the creation of safer work environment. The school has a very robust policy toward school attendance and tardiness and as a result, the average weekly attendance is now significantly higher. This is another indicator that the students are becoming more responsible for their learning. The teachers see attendance as high priority and a growing strength of the 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 well developed.**

The administration use walkthroughs and formal observations as a means of tracking the effectiveness of professional development. The principal collates data from individual teachers to determine their professional and personal needs to improve their instruction. The school’s overall goals are combined with this data to produce a school professional development program with the sole purpose of improving instruction.

The school conferences regularly at faculty, grade level and within subjects to determine the most effective ways of meeting the needs of individual students and whole groups. There is strong evidence to show the faculty regularly shares data on how to develop teachers’ instructional ability. The work of the inquiry team, as they develop their remit, will be an additional resource for teachers seeking more effective ways to develop differential teaching. The school has a number of methods of welcoming and inducting new staff.

These include extensive orientation programs covering every aspect of school life as well as assigning an experienced faculty member to act as a “buddy”.

The school has invested a great deal of time into ensuring procedures, systems and codes of conduct are in place. These, coupled with the introduction of a school dress code, have had a dramatic effect on the functioning of the school. The school’s community appreciates that the adoption of these methods has gone a long way to the development of a more positive learning environment. The parents endorse this as being a significant feature as to why the school is growing in reputation. In a similar vein, there are a growing number of external partners willing to support the school in its drive to meet its goals.

**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 well developed.**

The school makes very good use of its planning procedures. These are derived from the Comprehensive Education Plan, which acts as a conduit for improving the school’s overall outcomes. Similarly, as interim goals are achieved new timeframes are established to reflect this. Parents play a part in the goal setting and welcome the opportunity to be involved.

The principal, in conjunction with her assistants, uses a number of indicators to measure the achievement of goals. These include periodic assessments, homework monitoring and moderated test marking. These have proved extremely valuable in tracking the progress of students between each marking period and, because of their findings, they are able to respond positively and quickly to overall goal setting. The administration meets weekly to monitor the effectiveness of teacher planning and is constantly updating the staff with new and relevant data in order for them to reassess their interim targets. This takes place in subject areas, across whole grade levels or with individual teachers.

The school uses interim data, such as that generated by diagnostic tests, to very good effect. This is of particular importance to the realigning of next-learning steps for special education students and English language learners. The school has been particularly effective in using this type of formative data to improve the outcomes of its students. The school is a reflective establishment, which continues to develop. It has systems in place for the identification and sharing of data to accelerate learning and the principal has a very clear vision of the impact this has in progressing the school.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Edward Bleeker Middle School (MS185)</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				X	

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .</b>	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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				X	

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .</b>	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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				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 make 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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				X	