



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Briggs Avenue Academy

Elementary School 008

3010 Briggs Avenue

Bronx

NY 10458

Principal: Rosa Maria Peralta

Dates of review: December 5 – 7, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Alvin Jeffs

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Briggs Avenue Academy is an elementary school with 1166 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 14% Black, 70% Hispanic, 8% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 29% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 91.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 78% eligibility.

The principal has been in post since September 2007, having been assistant principal prior to that. The four other members of the cabinet are also new to their positions, but all have previously taught within the school. There were also 16 new teachers starting in September 2007.

Class numbers are high as the result of 140% over-utilization. The school hosts a Montefiore Hospital Clinic, which provides health and mental health care for over 500 of the students and families.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Students value the secure environment in which they are respected and thrive.
- A broad curriculum is enriched with many stimulating activities and experiences.
- Parents greatly appreciate the accessibility and sensitivity of all staff.
- The school has an outstanding principal with a clear vision, who provides leadership of high quality.
- A newly appointed cabinet is respected by all staff for providing good support and advice with regard to a wide range of initiatives.
- Classroom staff have the highest expectations for the students they teach.
- The use of data to monitor the progress of all students is outstanding.
- An outstanding partnership with Montefiore Hospital Clinic provides exceptional care and support for over 500 students.
- The use of data to evaluate the success of all new initiatives is rigorous and very effective.
- High quality professional development and coaching contributes well to teachers' confidence and expertise.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the availability of up to date technology to support differentiation in teachers' planning.
- Review the number of writing reflection assessments to further assess what is manageable by classroom teachers.
- Increase opportunities for all staff to share techniques and practices relating to differentiated teaching.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

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

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Despite the fact that every member of the cabinet is new to their role, the school continues to develop well. An outstanding principal provides a clear vision and there is excellent strategic and day to day management of the school. The teaching staff are very good practitioners and, as a result, the school is well respected by parents and this accounts for its over-utilization.

There is a wealth of data within the school and good procedures have been developed to analyze it. Every member of staff understands the progress of each student in detail. As there is close collaboration at all levels of the school, this shared knowledge is the basis of curriculum planning as well as individual program setting. The clear and specific responsibilities of cabinet members mean that there is very good oversight of key groups within the school. The monitoring of special education students and those for whom English is a new language is very good indeed. Staff use data well to plan and teach. It also means that the high expectations they have for their students are converted into clear targets that are well shared with students and parents.

The curriculum is strong, enriched by many activities within and beyond the school day. The teaching is well aligned to the school's strategic goals and decisions relating to finance, staffing and scheduling are always made in the light of the annual priorities. Supervision and support of all staff is excellent, with good feedback on performance. The other major area of capacity, the care and welfare of students is greatly aided by the outstanding partnership with the Montefiore Hospital Clinic. The outcome of this is that students feel secure and well taught. There are good procedures in place for monitoring the success of the clear annual targets. This reflects the success with which the school has addressed one major recommendation from the previous quality review. The second recommendation, to analyze data relating to all sub-groups better, has also been well addressed. The school is very clear about the groups within the school and uses assessment data well to evaluate the progress of each one.

The inquiry team has set itself an imaginative and valuable task. It is observing thirty- two students who are experiencing difficulties with English language arts (ELA). The focus of the observations relates to two areas of work, non-fiction and poetry that have been shown to be weakest in the school's item analyses. The team is at the stage of comparing the responses of this group with those of a higher achieving group in an attempt to identify techniques and practices that are most successful.

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 knows its students very well. It uses data to provide a detailed picture of each one. Cabinet members analyze this data promptly and in depth. As they each have individual responsibility for two grades, the outcomes of the analyses are disseminated to teachers very quickly. This means that the interpretation of progress scores and trends is initially viewed in the context of the school's strategic aims. It then becomes the property of teachers and the basis of formal classroom observations and discussions. Thus, all relevant staff then know that, for example, grade 2 note taking is an area for development.

Data relating to students who are English language learners or receive special education support is detailed. It provides the basis for many scheduling and staffing decisions, such as the development of before school English language arts (ELA) classes, and detailed amendments to individualized education programs (IEPs). There are many ethnic sub-groups, as the school has over a dozen languages spoken in homes. In addition, there are students who live in shelter accommodation and others with medical or psychiatric conditions. The excellent use of official data means that the school has a detailed profile of individual students and groups for whom adaptations may be needed.

Analyzing the school's past performance allows the administration to note trends in performance and close links with other, similar schools provide the opportunity to make comparisons with their performance data. As more detailed data is available to the school, it intends to make these comparisons on a more regular basis. Staff training and the increased access to school and Department of Education databases mean that teachers can now make their own analyses and plan and teach accordingly.

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 staff's high expectations for all students and good collaboration are the keys to much of the school's success. At grade and classroom levels staff regularly share observations and ask advice. The swift transmission of data to weekly grade meetings identifies the implications for teaching which are immediately discussed and actions taken. The most recent set of data has allowed staff in many grades to look at successful and unsuccessful responses to questions. This now informs their planning, together with that of the before and after school classes with regard to examination preparation.

The regular interaction between classroom teachers and staff providing specialist support ensures that good sharing of perceptions and work samples take place. This in turn means that the overall program for each student is a composite of the assessments from their different perspectives. Where students experience difficulties the response is quick and effective as the result of this sharing. Where concerns are raised staff are able to meet to discuss plans of action. These plans focus on targets that are measurable and subject to review on a regular basis. For those students with IEPs, these targets are built

into regular reviews of targets and progress. Supervision of this process is strong and excellent procedures are developing which allow staff to use case conferences to adapt both planning and teaching. Targets are central to classroom practice. Students are asked to identify their own targets in conjunction with teachers. The success of work in general and against these individual targets then becomes the basis of regular student-teacher and parent-teacher conferences. Parents in particular appreciate the detail and quantity of information that is available to them.

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's vision of high achievement and the development of independent learners are well served by the curriculum. It is a broad curriculum within which there are good opportunities for observing and assessing student performance. Thus, through the process of analyzing or reflecting on students' written work teachers develop new and useful assessment skills. It has also enhanced the detailed information about student performance in key areas of the curriculum. These valuable reflections are time consuming but teachers' skills are developing well.

The curriculum is enriched in many ways. Music is taught throughout the school and instrumental teaching has begun this term. There are good opportunities for art and a well structured physical education program is developing. These subjects are progressing well as the result of the recent considered appointment of qualified staff. Work before and after school allows intensive support for many students in both language and test taking skills. In addition, there are opportunities for students arising from the school's close involvement with organizations such as Shadowbox Theater Green Meadows Farm and Lehmann Performing Arts. Technology is under resourced for a school this size. Lack of available hardware within the school hampers full differentiation through effective research opportunities for higher achieving students.

The maintenance of attendance is important for students seeking graduation and this is well monitored with a combination of procedures including rewards for 100% attendance and a focus on groups of students for whom attendance or lateness is a problem. The effective use of the budget and the careful scheduling to ensure common planning times for staff and is evidence of the care exercised by the administration.

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.

All staff benefit from the formal and informal observations of their teaching. They say that the process is sensitive and very supportive, with detailed feedback indicating sensible professional development. The success of this is reflected in the steady growth of inter visitations where staff can share good practice.

This and professional development are real strengths of the school. There are strong programs of external training that are attended by staff and turnkeyed back to their

colleagues. For new staff there is an effective mentoring program, although the recipients say that the whole culture of the school supports them in what they are learning and teaching. Staff are good at sharing and in general at differentiation of tasks to meet student need.

The school has developed good capacity for student support through its outstanding partnership with the Montefiore Hospital Clinic that shares its site. This partnership means that over 500 families gain health care, together with highly specialized support for mental health and behavior problems. It contributes significantly to attendance, the wellbeing of students and the confidence of parents.

The partnership is one aspect of the very good alignment of advice and support services available for students and their families within the school. Thus, students receive good health education, many have easy access to a highly specialized clinic and all benefit from the expertise of additional staff within the school. Students appreciate the skilled support they receive from speech specialists and guidance counsellors. Similarly, families praise the good advice they receive and the practical links to outside agencies.

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 principal has an outstandingly clear vision which is shared by her administration and faculty. The success of this vision may be seen in the development of well qualified, mature and independent learners. It is also reflected in the work of teachers and students alike. End of the year discussions produce clear strategic goals for the following year. At the start of each year one-on-one discussions with senior staff allow teachers to develop targets for their students and an annual professional development program for themselves.

It is a major development within the school that all of these targets are monitored on a regular basis and adjustments made where necessary. For the cabinet this means monthly meetings to review strategic targets and continual consideration of all school procedures in the light of how best to attain them. For teachers it means that regular observations, grade meetings and data summaries provide opportunities to assess how far they are along the route to meeting the targets they have identified at the start of the year. It is a process that allows administration and classroom staff to adjust programs, monitor progress and identify what extra resources are needed to accomplish the agreed goals. The classification of class library books in to readability levels was monitored and action taken when the momentum seemed too slow. Similarly, whenever the progress of individual students seems to be slowing down it triggers prompt discussions and immediate action.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Briggs Avenue Academy	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 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
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X	