



Charter School Annual Site Visit Report
Charter Schools Office
2009-2010

BRONX GLOBAL LEARNING INSTITUTE FOR GIRLS
CHARTER SCHOOL
ANNUAL SITE VISIT REPORT

JUNE 2010

Part 1: Executive Summary

School Overview and History:

Bronx Global Learning Institute for Girls Charter School is an elementary school serving approximately 150 students from kindergarten through second grade in the 2009-2010 school year.¹ The school opened in 2008 with kindergarten and first grade and will grow to serve students in kindergarten through fifth grade.² It is currently housed in a DOE facility in District 7.³

The school population comprises 31% Black, 64% Hispanic, 0% White, and 0% Asian students. 88% of students are designated as Title I.⁴ The student body includes 10% English language learners and 4% special education students.⁵

The school has not yet received a Progress Report or a state/federal accountability designation. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 90%.⁶

Annual Review Process Overview:

The NYC DOE Charter Schools Office conducts an annual site visit of New York City Department of Education authorized charter schools in order to assess three primary questions: is the school an academic success; is the school a viable organization; and is the school in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The visits are conducted by representatives of the New York City Department of Education Charter Schools Office Accountability Team and last the duration of one school day. The annual site visit begins with a meeting with the principal and school leadership team. Subsequently, the reviewers visit classrooms and hold brief meetings with available administrators, teachers, and students. Areas of evaluation include, but are not limited to: academic goals and mission; curriculum and instruction; school culture and learning environment; assessment utilization; parent engagement; government structures and organizational design; community support; special populations; and safety and security.

The following experts participated in the review of this school:

- Sylvia Rabiner, Education Consultant
- Aamir Raza, Director of Oversight and Policy, NYC DOE Charter Schools Office

¹ NYC DOE ATS system

² NYC DOE ATS system and charter agreement

³ NYC DOE Location Code Generating System database

⁴ Demographic Data drawn from NYC DOE ATS System; Title I percentage from 2008 NY State Report Cards

⁵ Student Demographic data is inputted by school staff into the ATS enrollment database and summarized by NYC DOE staff.

⁶ NYC DOE School Progress Report. This document is posted on the NYC DOE website at <http://www.schools.nyc.gov>.

Part 2: Findings

What the school does well

- The school maintains high academic expectations and employs strategies for the full range of students served, including special needs students and English Language Learners.
 - The school has an instructional framework and curriculum consistent with State Standards, which can be seen across all classrooms and to which all members of the school community are held accountable.
 - Learning objectives were clearly visible and aligned in both the English and Spanish language classrooms.
 - An emphasis on reading, writing and critical thinking was observed in all ELA and SLA classrooms where students were reading a variety of fiction and nonfiction materials, analyzing text, making predictions (one student was observed asking her teacher "I wonder if we can predict what is going to happen in this story?"), writing about personal experience, writing about characters in the texts, and responding to critical thinking questions.
 - An interdisciplinary, project-based approach to inquiry instruction was observed in several classes, including the kindergarten Frog and Butterfly life cycle projects, the first grade endangered animals project, and the second grade women leaders research project.
- The school utilizes differentiated instruction and an integrated curriculum to promote proficiency and actively engage students.
 - Every class is taught by two teachers. There is also a literacy specialist to assist in selected classes.
 - Differentiation was observed in the first and second grade ELA and SLA classes where students were either reading in leveled ability groups with a teacher, working in pairs, working independently, using computers for interactive learning on a website called "Literacy Center," or listening to audio books.
 - All students attend an additional daily writing period to develop their projects, which entail research, writing, and oral presentation.
 - Students in need of academic interventions are provided daily individual and small group instruction by the special education teacher and the literacy specialist before and during the school day. Fifteen selected students receive additional enrichment three afternoons weekly.
 - A wide variety of multilevel texts and materials in both English and Spanish is available in all classrooms.
- The school fosters a safe learning environment which encourages both student academic progress and teacher professional development.
 - Teachers are provided common planning time daily for 1 ¼ to 1 ½ hours to plan units and lessons utilizing a detailed template which includes the lesson goal, development activities, vocabulary, materials, differentiated groupings, assessments and homework. There is additional time for cross-grade conversations at a full faculty meeting once a month from 4-7pm. There are two weeks of professional development each summer before the start of school.
 - Teachers submit detailed lesson plans weekly for principal review and feedback.
 - Additional professional development support is provided by Victory Schools, the Bronx Consortium, and attendance at the conferences of the National Association of Bilingual Educators.
 - The school upholds a shared set of expectations, routines, and procedures which can be observed across all classrooms. The Lee Canter Model of positive narration is utilized. Positive narration was consistently seen in classrooms.

- Classrooms are clean and attractive with an abundance of teaching materials, charts, and visual aids posted to keep students focused and on track.
- The school employs a rigorous assessment system and data-tracking tools to monitor student performance and inform teaching and learning.
 - Assessments include the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, the DIBELS benchmarks for literacy, The Scott Foresman Assessments for literacy, the Everyday Math Assessments for Math, the McGraw Hill End of Year Social Studies Assessment, and the McGraw Hill Science Assessment. These assessments, combined with teacher-designed assessments, are used to assist with classroom groupings, to target students in need of additional support, and to inform instruction.
 - The school tracks and analyzes all achievement data to determine strengths and deficits for individual students, whole classes, and the whole school.
 - Teachers have developed a detailed dual language progress report card for parents which indicates student progress in Elements of Reading and Writing, Math, Science, Computer Technology, Social Studies, and Character Development.
- The school has built a strong culture that supports and sustains student learning and that celebrates achievement.
 - Classrooms and hallways display an abundance of student work indicating goals achieved and excellence demonstrated.
 - Every morning, students gather to greet the principal, teachers, and one another.
 - All students take Suzuki Violin and ballet. There are public recitals of ballet and violin for parents and guests.
 - Students are comfortable coming to the principal's office to share their "million dollar words" or just say hello. The principal addresses each student by name and provides positive comments to encourage achievement and successful classroom behaviors.

What the school needs to improve

- At present, students who exhibit behavior which interrupts the learning environment are primarily dealt with by the principal.
 - The school is encouraged to plan for a system of referral as the school grows and the student population increases which does not depend solely upon the principal.
- At present the common planning time for teachers consists of a daily student lunch period/ teacher preparation period.
 - It is suggested that the school consider alternatives to provide teachers with additional extended common planning time to enable their collaborative and cross-grade conversations as the school adds grades.
 - One possibility would be to end the formal school day at 3:00pm once or twice a month and hire teaching artists from the community to provide after school enrichment while the teachers are meeting.

Part 3: Framing Questions

FRAMING QUESTIONS:

Throughout the Renewal Process and the life of each school's charter, the NYCDOE Charter Schools Office uses the following framing questions to monitor Charter School success:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
2. Has the School Been a Viable Organization?
3. Has the School Been in Compliance with All Applicable Laws and Regulations?

Annual Site Visit Rubric:

1. Has the School Been an Academic Success?
 - Academic Goals and Mission
 - School components and curriculum align together and holistically support the mission
 - School has high academic expectations and employs strategies for the full range of students served by the school, including those at risk and those with special needs
 - Curriculum and Instruction
 - The educational plan is flexible and is adjusted to meet the performance levels and learning needs of all enrolled students
 - School implements programming to address the needs of students with disabilities and ELLs
 - Teachers demonstrate the use of differentiated instructional techniques to support the varying ways by which students learn
 - School has implemented programming for students who need remediation or acceleration
 - School Culture
 - The culture is strong, intentional, supportive and sustainable and promotes student learning
 - The school motivates all students and respects the diversity of learners and cultures in the community
 - School offers programs, activities or support services beyond academics to address students' social and emotional needs
 - School calendar and day are set to provide extra supports to ensure that students are able to meet and exceed academic goals
 - Schedule for communication to parents/students is timely and allows for due process, includes strategies to prepare students for transitions and strategies for those students who are not on schedule, presents a clear and fair system that complies with students' due process rights
 - Structures that foster the development of authentic, sustained, caring, respectful relationships among all stakeholders within school
 - Behavioral expectations and social supports that reflect the school's mission and comply with all applicable laws and regulations
 - Assessment
 - Establishes a culture of continuous improvement and accountability for student learning
 - Develops assessments that shape and inform instruction on an ongoing basis and develop data that's used to gauge student, teacher and school progress through formative and summative assessment
 - Student learning measured with multiple forms of assessments/metrics
 - Develops educational goals and performance metrics that are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Reflect the Mission and Time-Specific
 - Develops assessments that are appropriately aligned with curriculum, instruction, and adopted standards

- Provides evidence of how data will influence instruction, professional development and curricular adjustments
 - Parent Engagement
 - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
 - Capacity to communicate effectively with parents and families
 - Parent engagement strategies that integrate and mobilize parents within the school community as conduits for student success
2. Is the School a Viable Organization
- Governance Structures and Organizational Design
 - School has articulated appropriate roles, responsibilities, and decision-making structure for school community members (including Board of Trustees and school leadership)
 - An accountability structure that provides effective oversight of the educational program and fiscal components of the school is in place and utilized
 - Board regularly reviews a data dashboard of student achievement and fiscal management that forms the basis for Board discussions and decisions
 - Board has diverse skill set that lends itself to strong educational / operational oversight
 - Board has an articulated process for ongoing policy development, Board member development and self-evaluation
 - Organizational charts are aligned with mission; roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
 - Board has developed essential strategic partnerships with organizations that support the mission of the school
 - Community Support
 - School Leadership demonstrated responsiveness to the unique needs and interests of the community to be served
 - School has established a presence in the community and has buy in from community members
3. Is the School in Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations
- Special Populations
 - Well-defined plan and sufficient capacity to service the learning needs of Special Education students, English Language Learners
 - School adequately addresses the academic and non academic needs of students in need of remediation, students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and gifted students
 - There is a coherent plan for meeting the non-academic needs of students with disabilities, students with interrupted formal education, and other populations
 - School employs a process to identify students at risk of not meeting expectations and creates intervention plans and follow up
 - School demonstrates a comprehensive recruitment, enrollment and retention approach that is sensitive to the diverse needs of students
 - School admission policy and lottery preferences serve to create a student body that reflects community demographics and give a preference to community school district residents
 - Safety and Security
 - School is well maintained
 - Transitions and student gatherings are orderly and well supervised
 - Expectations for student behavior are well known and are enforced fairly
 - School is current with all safety recruitments and drills.
 - AED machines are in operation and school staff is trained in CPR